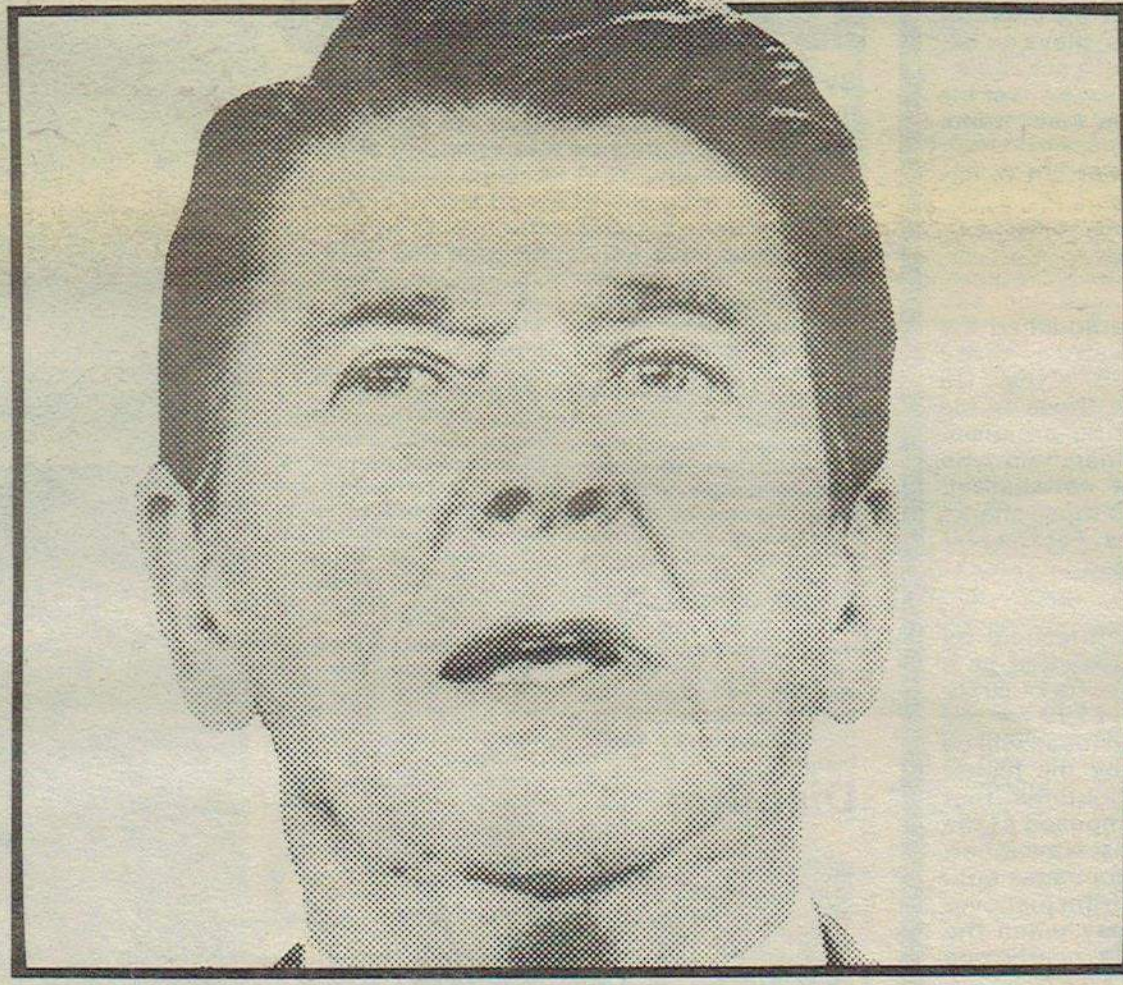


Socialist Challenge

INSIDE
A BUDGET FOR THE RICH

The butcher of El Salvador

KEEP HIM OUT



MASS MURDERER and JS president Ronald Reagan should be kept out of Britain. His invitation to address both Houses of Parliament is an insult to the labour movement and all the working people of Britain.

It is Reagan who is planning to station Cruise missiles across Europe.

It is Reagan who is presiding over the most massive re-armament programme in history while the welfare services and living stan-

dards of American workers decline.

It is Reagan and his administration who are pouring millions of dollars of military aid into Central America to support the corrupt and brutal dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Every day more evidence emerges of the atrocities committed by the US-backed Salvadorean army against ordinary villagers and workers of the country.

Delegations from Amnesty International, the British Council of Churches and the US Congress all say the same thing: mass murder is being carried out by the military junta and its death squads.

Raining death on Salvadorean peasants from helicopters, and spending billions on Cruise, Trident and MX missiles is what Reagan calls 'defending freedom' and 'stopping communism'. In reality it is evil insanity, aimed at defending American

interests. Reagan is the enemy of the people of Britain and of the whole world. The Labour Party should demand that he is kept out of Britain.

If he does come, Labour MPs should boycott all the ceremonies marking his visit, including his address to Parliament.

Every trade union branch, every Labour Party constituency and every trades council should say it loud and clear: the people of Bri-

tain don't want this barbarian in the country

But in all probability the Tories will go ahead with their invitation in the face of mass opposition. Reagan will then be in Britain on Monday 7 June and Tuesday 8 June. CND have changed their demonstration on 6 June from Greenham Common to London.

Hundreds of thousands must come out onto the streets behind the slogans 'No Cruise, no Trident,

Hands off El Salvador!' But before Reagan arrives we need a huge turnout on the demonstration in London on 28 March called by the El Salvador Committee, at which Labour leader Michael Foot will speak.

The freedom fighters of El Salvador have just launched a new offensive. Every Socialist Challenge reader should be on the streets in London on 28 March to support their struggle and keep Reagan out!

Why we defend Militant

IT HAS been a good week for hypocrisy. Pat Wall of *Militant* has made an 'attack on democracy' — by warning that the state might be used against socialists.

Mouthpiece of the counter-attack is the *Sunday Times*, armed with 'revelations' clipped from *Militant's* pages. The *Sunday Times* is accountable to a globe-trotting millionaire.

Leading the counter-attack is Labour's right. They want a cabinet accountable to the Bank of England.

Behind the attack are union leaders who hardly know what a ballot is unless it's paid for by the Tories.

This dispute is not about parliament. In case you haven't noticed, *Militant* is searching for a parliamentary socialist government elected through the Labour Party. Whether they also demand flying pigs is not recorded.

The dispute is about the fate of guardians of freedom like Judge Denning, who was elected by no-one and publicly proclaims his right to overrule parliament.

Clean off the bullshit, and what do you find? You can't be 'democratic' if you defend yourself against the state.

So can we expect an inquiry into the Labour executive's support for the TUC's illegal general strike to free five dockers in 1972? Will SOGAT's Bill Keys, who calls on trade unionists to break Tebbit's law, be up for the third degree? Well, maybe.

For a battle for freedom is going on — led by the workers of Laurence Scott and Plessey; by black youth and women; by everyone fighting oppression. The Tories are throwing the state's full weight into this battle with laws that would look mild in a police state.

The rich want a safe Labour Party. They want it to abstain from the fight for freedom and bow to a pet cabinet.

The *Sunday Times*, speaking on their behalf, is telling the Labour Party that only on this basis will their presence in government be tolerated.

That is what the witch-hunt against the *Militant* means.

The Labour right is saying 'we accept'. That is what the 'truce' means.

What do all these people say? *If you want 'democracy', forget about freedom.* We have a message for them. We want freedom and democracy: We want socialism. We want socialism.

We defend *Militant*.

EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATION SUNDAY 28 MARCH HYDE PARK LONDON

Budget for profits

The Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe dubbed his budget as one 'to help industry and create jobs'. It certainly was oriented to helping industry. This, however, had no connection with creating jobs.

By maintaining the same medium-term financial strategy, Howe knows that unemployment is *bound* to continue to increase. And this is what he wants.

He gave the game away with his talk in his budget speech about the purpose of his youth schemes. These, he admitted, were to 'introduce market mechanism into the determination of wage rates'. In other words, to use the slave-labour wages for youth as a mechanism for cutting wage rates through the pressure of mass unemployment. As his favourite economic agency, the London Business School, recently argued the Tories are aiming for a further 10 per cent cut in wages.

His pathetic proposal for the creation of 100,000 'community jobs' plays an exactly similar role to his youth schemes.

Talk of creating jobs is just a cover for hand-outs to industry. The main items were:

- *£1bn from the one per cent cut in national insurance surcharge
- *£250 subsidy through gas, electricity and coal charge reductions.

Chancellor Howe left untouched the 0.4 per cent who run industry — those who earn more than £27,750 a year. He had handed out £344m to those in his previous budgets. In fact he promised those people more Amersham-type presents. £500m more of nationalised property is to be sold off to those sharks at bargain basement prices. For the rest of us taxation was increased.

His raising of the tax threshold by about 14 per cent was presented as a generous gesture. But the extra £1.50 for the single person and the £1.79 for the married man that this could mean will be almost exactly matched by the higher national insurance contributions that now come into effect — imposed at the time of the 'mini' budget last November. Overall, therefore, total stoppages continue to show an increase from just over a quarter of take home pay when the Tories came into office to nearly one third now.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Support Islington NALGO

SUPPORT is growing for the 2000 Islington NALGO members on strike against the SDP Council. Camden NALGO donated £2000 to the strike fund and Securicor workers have refused to cross the picket lines. The SDP Council has responded by employing a scab firm, White Shield, to do the work instead.

The strikers have voted to stay out until all the members are guaranteed a job and the threat of closure against a children's home is lifted.

The media has had a field day. The Sun editorial described the residential workers as 'monsters' for taking strike action to save their jobs. The response of the kids at

the home was somewhat different.

In a letter to NALGO they wrote: 'It is Islington Council who are the monsters, not our staff. We want our staff back but only if all our homes can stay open. Thank you to everyone who has supported the dispute'.

The strikers have also had the union leadership to deal with. NALGO executive appointed a subcommittee of three to oversee the dispute who decided not to pay the paltry £20 per week strike pay for the first two weeks of dispute. Fortunately last Friday's national Local Government Group meeting of NALGO overwhelmingly recommended to the executive to over-

turn this decision.

The executive have now enforced secret ballot on the dispute despite 1 regular votes at mass meetings showing per cent support for the strike. The 'biased' ballot asks the strikers: 'On basis of £20 a week strike pay are you prepared to continue strike action until satisfactory return to work has been negotiated?'

The strike needs more support from the labour movement. Send resolutions and money to: Islington NALGO strike HQ, c. NLP students union, Ladbroke House Highbury Barn, London N5.

SDP in council Vicious union bashers

By Davy Jones

'IT WILL be worth keeping an eye on the SDP's first council: it may be a foretaste of things to come nationally,' said Socialist Challenge last December after the SDP had seized control of Islington council. Dramatic events in the last few weeks have fully confirmed this view.

In just three months the SDP council has carried out a number of attacks on local working people. It has decided to sell off some 50 short-life properties.

It has cut grants and allowances to voluntary organisations, refusing altogether to fund the Islington Area Youth Committee and the Islington Action Group on Unemployment, in an area with twenty per cent unemployment. It is planning further cuts in services and redundancies of local government staff for the forthcoming year's budget.

Dispute

It has also provoked a bitter dispute with the local government workers in an attempt to smash the union, NALGO. First it refused to honour the contract of one of its employees, Rob Webb. When this was clearly shown to be illegal by the Council's own disciplinary hearing the SDP councillors shut down a children's home to deliberately prolong the strike.

On 1 March they even threw out an ACAS-backed 'compromise' formula to end the dispute so that they could pursue their confrontation with the union.

Such reactionary attitudes are not so surprising when one recalls the history of the Islington SDP councillors, before 25 of them defected from the Labour Party. Councillor Bill Bayliss was always notorious for his hostility to the unions and Labour Councils under his leadership were infamous for their measly housing programmes.

Perhaps the most

notorious of the SDP's recent recruits in Islington is Michael O'Halloran MP, legendary for his ballot-rigging and bogus delegates. It is no secret that he followed the defecting councillors into the SDP to retain his political base. The councillors had defected when they did try to ensure selection as councillors by the local SDP, as most faced the chop from the local Labour Party.

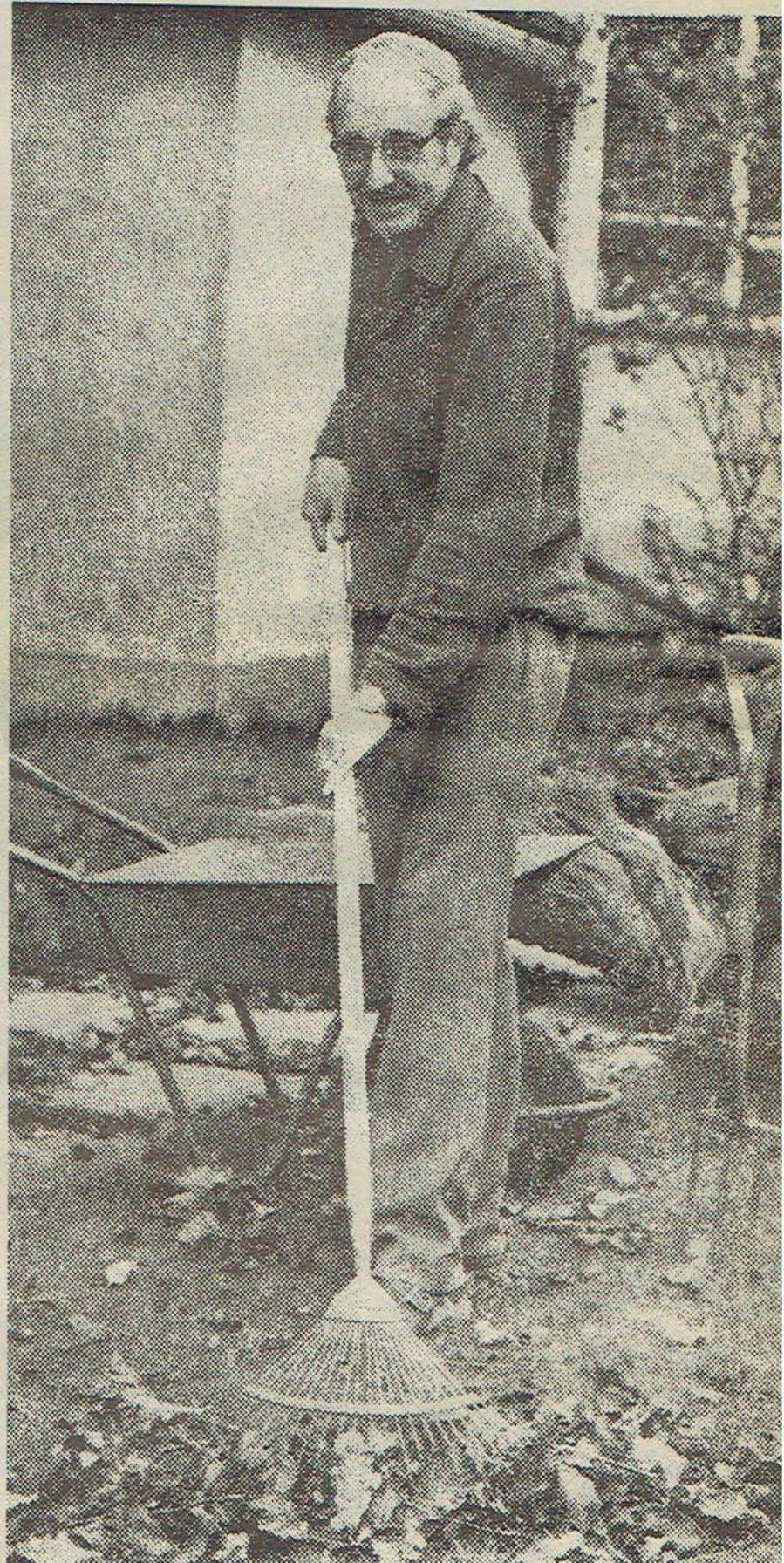
The ballot-rigging past of these 'democrats' has followed them into their new home. The Guardian reported on March that the national SDP is to set up an inquiry into allegations of impropriety in the recruitment of new members in the Islington SDP.

Forms

It appears that Councillor Bill Bayliss arrived at the national headquarters on 8 December last year with 145 application for membership forms. Coincidentally that was the final day for new members to qualify to vote in the secret ballot to select the SDP candidates for the local elections in May.

Head office refused to ratify the members' voting rights and some 50 enraged local SDP members, again coincidentally including many of the recent SDP councillor converts, have called for a special area party meeting to enfranchise all local members.

These seedy goings-on have not been helped by the publication last week of an Aims of Industry pamphlet by another SDP councillor, Roger Roswell, snappily entitled 'Dealing with the Marxist threat to industry'. In a fanfare of press publicity Roswell announced that: 'The ac-



John Grant, SDP MP for Islington Central, raking some muck.

tivity of extremists threatens the future of democracy, of economic growth and the freedoms of working people.'

Roswell explains in great detail how the extremists 'know how to discredit and foreclose any alternatives to strike action ... they believe in conflict.' One might think he was talking about his SDP colleagues in Islington Council, but no, he was referring to 'the Marxists'.

The local scab local paper, *Islington Gazette*,

itself currently backed by the NUJ, the local unions and the Labour Party over enforced redundancies, has echoed the same themes as Roswell. In frenetic front page stories it has 'exposed' Trotskyist agitators undermining the SDP council which the *Islington Gazette* backs to the hilt.

Allies

This ugly union-bashing crew has more

sinister allies. One of three NALGO executive members responsible dealing with the Islington dispute is none other than Mike Blick, a trade union advisor and member of the SDP!

Ballot-riggers, Aims of Industry, scab journal and union-bashers: that the Islington Socialist Democratic Council and its allies. Remember the next time someone tells you they are fed up with extremists and support a 'moderate' SDP.

The lost budget speech

By Alan Freeman

The budget: a socialist answer.

Those who bothered to listen to the broadcasts of the House of Commons debate on the budget no doubt fell asleep like the rest of us. But it could have been different. Below we print the speech that Michael Foot could have made — if he was a socialist.

IT HAS been the custom to address members of the House as honourable. I have no intention of continuing this tradition in respect of the Party opposite.

Who will the chancellor help with this budget? He will, of course, do nothing for the four million unemployed.

On the contrary, their benefits will continue to fall from their present level — already lower than at any time since 1951.

He will do nothing for wage earners, whose take-home pay has risen by 9 per cent while the Tories own price index shows their living costs to have risen by 15 per cent.

He will do nothing to halt the wholesale destruction of the productive resources of this country.

Hatred

His true purpose is revealed by the scandal we witnessed last week, in which his friends made £24 million in a day from the sale of precious public assets.

The chancellor's budget confirms for the whole country that this government, a government of partisan class hatred, has no legitimate claim to represent ordinary people and no right to continue in office. This budget is a budget for the rich.

We expected nothing else from a cabinet composed, in its majority, of millionaires.

My party intends to join hands with the unions to drive it out at the earliest possible opportunity.

What will we do on arriving in office? Let me first explain our priorities — the direct opposite of the chancellor's.

Work

Our first aim will be to restore full employment. We say this not only because it is in our belief a basic right of the British people, but because it is obviously the most efficient way to use our resources. Indeed we shall raise efficiency a few further meagre percentage points by extending this right to the Royal Family, the Lords, the present boards of the nationalised industries and over 50,000 idle shareholders.

There is plenty of work to do. We will immediately double the level of house building to 1,200,000 a year; we will spend £60m on health, £65m on education and a further £300m on urban renewal. To ensure the necessary material is forthcoming we shall mobilise the public sector industries and gear them for full output, injecting a further £2.1 billion in new capital.

These and other proposals, which the TUC and our Party have outlin-

ed, will demand initial government expenditure of £9 billion and will restore work to 800,000 people.

However I must now come to a number of further proposals which, for some unaccountable reason, I have previously failed to mention.

Firstly, we cannot allow the scandalous situation to persist whereby those in work are forced to accept longer and longer hours while their comrades are denied work. Jointly with the TUC we shall therefore be campaigning from now on for the abolition of all overtime to create a further 880,000 jobs and the introduction of the 35-hour week, to create a further million jobs. Our government will legislate this as compulsory.

It is unacceptable that this should be accompanied by any fall in the real income of working people and we will legislate to empower the unions to ensure that their members are paid, for a 35-hour week, the same as they now receive for an average working week with overtime. We shall of course index all wages and benefits.

Crisis

The introduction of an immediate programme of positive action for women and black people and the introduction of equal pay will further extend the right of employment to many now unfairly denied it.

The costs of these measures, which amount to around £12 billion, will of course be met by the employers, as I shall shortly explain.

Our opponents argue that the level of government spending we propose is utopian, and will provoke a crisis. A crisis will be provoked, but not for the reasons suggested. The money we spend will, of course, immediately be saved by the enormous drop in the cost of benefits, and by increased income tax, which will put the government £3 billion in the black. We shall supplement this by a 100 per cent tax accompanied by suspension of tax rebates on all incomes over £15,000 per year. A windfall tax of 100 per cent on all capital gains will be applied retrospectively to all purchasers of shares in public companies sold by the Tories.

Further immediate savings will be made by scrapping all nuclear and overseas military commitments.

No, the problem is a different one.

The cost of absorbing



Michael Foot: the speech he ought to make

unemployment should be met by the employers, shareholders and financiers of this country. This is in principle perfectly possible: a study of their appropriation accounts reveal that industrial and commercial companies distributed no less than £8 billion to Mr Howe's friends last year, and that the financial institutions returned post-tax profits of £4 billion.

By a remarkable coincidence these sums will exactly pay for the right to work, even leaving out of account the enormous benefits to the country of full production.

The problem we anticipate is that this will leave the chancellor's friends with no profit at all.

To be blunt, we do not think they will want to part with their money. We

believe them to be a corrupt and parasitic clique who are now desperately frightened because their fraudulent claim to represent the nation's interests is now exposed for the miserable deception that it is. We believe they will stoop to every means at their disposal to prevent their wealth being applied for socially necessary ends.

This is why the chancellor's colleague Mr Tebbit is preparing an unjust and violent law with which to bludgeon the unions into submission to the employers' insatiable demands; that is why he is endeavouring to pin the blame for the present unrest on young people and on the opposition benches, particularly my good comrade Mr Benn.

He hopes a 'law and

order' campaign can be used to justify a despotic attack on ordinary people who are doing no more than defending their rights against a tyrannical regime — whose true colours, I must add, are amply attested by its disgusting support, alone amongst European governments, for the brutal Salvadorean dictatorship.

I warn these gentlemen now that we will stand shoulder to shoulder with British working people in resisting, quite regardless of constitutional niceties, any attack which seeks to use the law to deprive them of their basic rights.

It is now clear that the party opposite, and those they speak for, have respect neither for law nor human dignity. Our government will therefore be obliged to take special measures to defend those

it represents, when next it takes office.

We anticipate that our policies will be the occasion for a considerable campaign by the employers, who will use them as an excuse for withdrawing capital, and will seek to use the courts and police against all those who resist this. I have in mind the fate of the valiant workers of Laurence Scotts, which our friends would like to see repeated across the country.

We do not consider the chancellor's friends to be the legitimate inheritors of the resources they now own. These resources were produced by the sweat of the workers of this country, and their present owners have shown themselves unfit to dispose of them. We will return control of these resources to those who produced

them.

We intend to see that the productive resources of this country are defended against the depredations of the chancellor's friends and brought back into use by those who work in them. We shall therefore legally empower the workers of any firm failing to meet its social obligations to the community to seize the assets of that firm.

In order to ensure that financial as well as physical assets are secure against abuse we intend to nationalise the banks and publish, for the scrutiny of the unions, the accounts, transactions and assets of every firm in Britain.

In order to initiate the planned use of these resources we shall be organising meetings, up and down the country, of Labour Party and union members to conduct an inventory of the resources at our disposal and prepare for a national economic plan. Our first step will be to contact the unions in every public sector industry to discuss the implementation of our proposals in that sector.

Loyalty

I have to confess that we do not feel confident that the loyalty of Whitehall, the army or the police can be relied on. Judge Denning has made it clear that he will outlaw parliamentary decisions with which he disagrees, no doubt with the same contempt he has shown for the people of London. In our last term of office we were finally convinced that Whitehall is a class-ridden bureaucratic anachronism, and we frankly place no trust in it at all. Most ominously, Brigadier Kitson has indicated that he considers the army should be ready to step in, in the event of such a conflict as we anticipate our policies will provoke.

Ashes

I must therefore say we shall find ourselves obliged to make some revisions to the Home Guard which the innovative Mr Nott has proposed. First we believe he misinforms the public as to what national wealth should be protected: we want to protect the very factories and buildings which his government is presently engaged in wrecking. Secondly, we cannot understand why he wishes to confine membership of the proposed body to the elderly and infirm. Our intention, on the contrary, would be to establish a guard comprising those very union members who have so steadfastly defended our democratic rights against the depredations of his party for so long.

And finally, we think he has misinformed the public as to the enemy to be fought. This enemy is not to be found in a far distant country. This enemy does not speak a foreign language.

Members of the House, this enemy is sitting opposite me. My party will not rest until it is utterly defeated and a new social order built on the ashes of its failure.

CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Young Socialists conference Time to change course

By Paul Smith

'FINALLY Conference recognises that the only solution to the problems facing working class people will be the nationalisation of the top 200 or so monopolies with compensation only on the basis of proven need...'

Guess who? The answer is Aberavon YS resolution to the Young Socialists conference... and many, many more!

Sometimes the concerns shift. This year the state gets a mention: ...'calls upon the next Labour government to abolish the monarchy because, while we have a monarchy with the power to dissolve parliament, they would use this power to stop a Labour government implementing a socialist programme.' (Ormskirk.)

Our old friends 'the workers in uniform' turn up in resolutions on the army and the police that would grace the mildest Labour lefty. On CND we are ritually warned that only socialism will guarantee peace: phraseology designed to justify passivity in the face of the task of building CND now.

Every year *Militant* uses the LPYS Conference, which takes place at Easter, to pass its programme. This exercise in sterile dogmatics is the polar opposite of the role youth have played in the class struggle in Britain and internationally. But only in odd nooks and crannies of the crowded agenda does that impressive role find a reflection in the resolutions.

Last summer British cities erupted in youth rebellion against unemployment, the police, racial harassment and the government. Youth have a vital part to play in the struggle for socialism. The LPYS is exactly the sort of fighting organisation that could channel their struggle — to give it political voice.

In October two million, mainly youth, marched across Europe protesting nuclear weapons. Young people were the backbone of the massive CND march in London. Yet resolutions from Brent East, Dearne Valley and others are required to call the leadership to order around implementing a practical campaign in line with last year's conference decision to affiliate to CND.

In the fight against job loss, the unemployment marches, the youth jobs train and now the campaign against Tebbit's proposals on YOPS, conference will debate demands on a future Labour government. But where is the desperately needed proposals for a campaign of mass action by youth now?

Younger workers are in the lead in struggles like Laurence Scott, Plesseys, even in the recent unofficial action of railworkers following the train drivers' strikes. Where are the proposals to continue the reform movements in the unions, which have grown up around those struggles, against the bureaucrats?

Thousands of young women will mobilise for the Labour Party's Women's right to work festival. Oxford LPYS calls for commitment to this campaign, and takes up the call for the implementation of the TUC programme for positive action for women. *Militant* finds itself to the right of the bureaucrats of the TUC opposing positive action as divisive, and is therefore in no position to give a lead to young women fighting for jobs.

Last year revolutions in El Salvador and Poland shook Reagan, Brezhnev and the world. Unlike the chauvinistic leaders of the British labour movement, youth want to throw their forces behind building a mass solidarity movement. Unfortunately resolutions like that of Reading YS which believes 'that it is vital that the future course of the Salvadorean revolution is ... based on a clear socialist programme ...' do not aid this process. The sectarians turn the world on its head.

What is needed is a massive call to action by the British labour movement to stay Reagan's and Thatcher's hand from an orgy of blood letting, not a breathtakingly ignorant discourse on the 'popular frontism' of the FDR.

West Stirlingshire YS provides a similar 'service' for the embattled workers of Poland. Its resolution is a ready-made programme for the Polish workers ... and little else. The mightiest events of the international revolution are thus numbed before the task of defending *Militant's* programme.

This process reaches its height with Birkenhead's resolution on Ireland which sees the fight as one with 'Orange and Green Tories'.

Unfortunately a majority of the resolutions to LPYS Conference clearly reflect the line of *Militant* whose aim is to turn a vital weapon for youth represented by the LPYS into a mirror image of its own sectarian posturing. They threaten to cut the YS off from the living movements and campaigns of youth both nationally and internationally.

But there are signs of a fight to change course. Resolutions from Brent East and Aberdeen lay out a fighting policy for the construction of a mass youth wing of CND.

Oxford and Newport resolutions survey the problems facing women and employment pointing up the central role of mass action aimed to force a programme of positive action on a future Labour government, starting from the commitment to build the Women's Right to Work Assembly on 5 June.

Birmingham Edgbaston's resolution on Ireland re-asserts the ABC of socialist principle of support for a national liberation struggle.

Behind these type of resolutions, is the presence of the thousands of youth who are battling with the Tories. Time is running out for the sectarians.

LONDON TRANSP



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist challenge)

Transport

By Mary Jacobs

NO TRANSPORT system in any country in the world is run without subsidies. Public transport is lit the arteries of any modern city. London Transport has passed on the rising cost of transport to passengers raising fares and by trying to raise productivity.

All this has done is to create a vicious cycle as fares have risen the number of passengers has dropped. And so it goes on. Since 1979 central government has been steadily withdrawing revenue support from passenger transport authorities and has redistributed that revenue in favour of rural areas.

London has a higher level of fare than most cities in the world, after local wages are taken into account. Subsidies to transport in other cities are much higher than in London.

New York has a 72 per cent subsidy compared to London's 46 per cent with the 'Fares Fair' scheme. After the Law Lords' ruling could fall as low as 12 per cent.

The degree of subsidy is a political decision governments make. The Tories' Transport Act allows for private interests to compete with public transport bus services. While the Tories are so opposed to subsidising existing public transport they are prepared to offer financial assistance to private firms.

The 'Fares Fair' scheme was a step in the right direction for public transport. But the Labour GLC would be the first to admit it did not go far enough. Nor is it sufficient to call on the next Labour government to change the law.

After all, the last Labour government

The response of the GLC

By Tessa van Gelderen

LAST December the Law Lords ruled that the Labour GLC's fares scheme was illegal. Workers know whose side the Law Lords are on. Unfortunately, over the past period they haven't been too clear which side their Labour GLC councillors are on. The Labour Party will be judged again, in the forthcoming May elections. The working class has good reason not to trust Labour's promises. The GLC stands indicted:

1. You neglected to mobilise the workers of London against the attacks you faced from this Tory government. In so doing you played into the hands of the union leaders who are not prepared to lead their members into battle against the Tories.
2. You failed to act in the interests of the working class when you refused to defy the Law Lords. Voting for cuts, loss of jobs and fare increases was against your election promises.
3. You tried to carry out your promises by increasing rates. You failed to realise that you could not carry out your election promises by making the working class pay for it — and expect support for your actions.

It is not too late to redeem yourselves and fight back against the Law Lords' decision. Your fares policy is the most popular decision Londoners have seen for a long time and given the right lead the working class of London will be right behind you.

The Labour GLC therefore has to:

1. Openly declare that not one job will be lost from London Transport.
2. Tell London Transport Executive that the GLC is in charge. No worker will be victimised and no prosecutions will be made in the event of any industrial action taken. GLC leaders should make it clear that they are in favour of workers defying the Law Lords by non collection of fares under the direction of the union leaderships.
3. Throw open the doors of County Hall and the GLC facilities to workers in struggle. County Hall should become a centre of workers' resistance to the Tories and the GLC should provide legal and financial assistance as well as full solidarity for any action transport workers may take.
4. On 21 March, the day the fares are due to increase, you, the GLC, together with the unions, should organise a massive demonstration through the City of London — past the Law Courts, past Fleet Street, past the Bank of England — to highlight who the real enemies of the workers are.

The success of carrying out these proposals will lay the basis not only for overturning the Law Lords' decision but for taking on this Tory government, lock, stock and barrel.

Failure to do so will be judged throughout London in the May elections as the workers take on the burden of paying for the crisis.

Finally the banner that should fly above County Hall, for the world to see should be 'No redundancies! no victimisations! not a penny on the fares!'

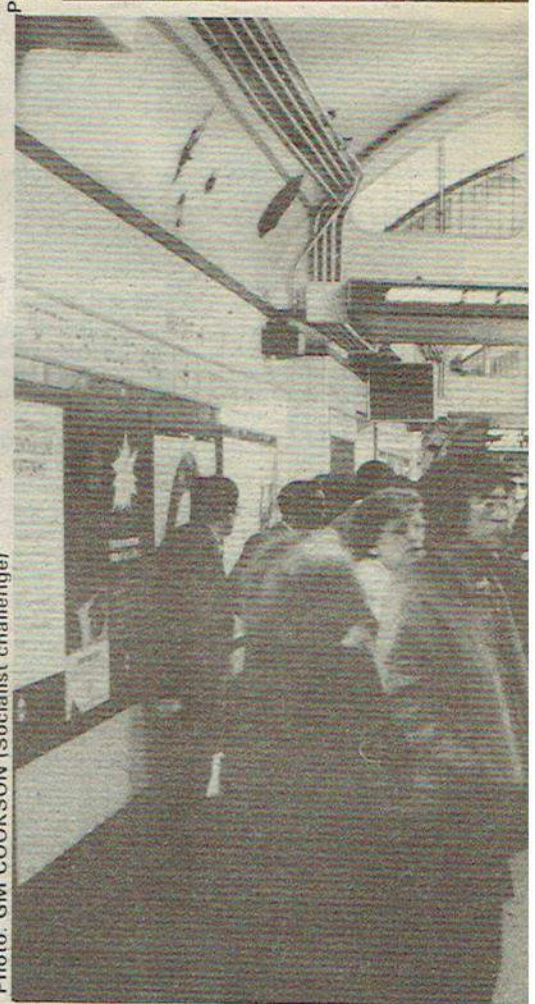


Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist challenge)

NOT A PENNY

RT: NO REDUNDANCIES!

the people

withdrew revenue from London Transport. Labour GLC should be campaigning now for a series of demands to be taken up by the labour movement and to be adopted into the manifesto that the Labour Party will fight on at the next election.

● For a free transport system.

● For an efficient transport system that meets the needs of working people. This means expanding the services, running more buses and tubes. More workers should be employed on decent wages without overtime.

● Don't make the workers pay for the service. Rates and rents should be frozen — if not reduced. The money has to come from central government. This implies a whole set of different priorities in public spending, where socially useful products are put before weapons of destruction.

'Payments of interest on debt have gone up enormously. It was £2bn in 1970. But this year it was £15bn which is higher than we have spent either on national health or on the education services.'

— Margaret Thatcher, prime minister speaking in the Commons, 4 March 1982.

● Nationalise the banks and finance houses. For every pound the GLC has to spend, it repays 38p to the finance houses in interest. The next Labour government has to tackle the problem of the commanding heights of the economy.

To do otherwise will only tinker with the system. The Labour GLC tried to do so, and failed. An all-out attack on the institutions of the capitalist class is the only real alternative to the crisis.



What the Law Lords mean to your pocket

Thinking of travelling by tube?

Current fare	Min/Max new fares
.20	.40/.60
.30	.40/.70
.40	.60/1.00
.50	.80/1.20
.60	.80/1.60
.70	1.00/1.80
.80	1.20/2.00
.90	1.40/2.20
1.00	1.50/2.40
1.10	1.80/2.60
1.20	2.00/2.80
1.30	2.20/3.00
1.40	2.40/3.20
1.60	2.80/3.20

Well bus then?

That's simple: all fares will double on 21 March.

The response of the unions

By Martin Eady, vice president, London Transport district council NUR

THE decision by the Law Lords and their Tory friends last December to attack the cheap fares policy of the GLC was a blatant attack on the living standards of London workers, and on the jobs, wages and working conditions of London Transport workers.

The decision means that fares will increase threefold by June, that services will be cut, that jobs will be lost. And, of course, that transport workers will be asked to pay for all this by accepting even lower wages.

There is no doubt that the mass of workers recognised the attack for what it was — Tory-inspired robbery of the poor to pay the rich. There was widespread anger and willingness to fight back. A lobby of County Hall in support of the cheap fares policy called at three days notice just before Xmas attracted over 500 transport workers — despite being organised by word of mouth.

The scale of the attack, the anger of the workers, and the wide support in the community demanded a decisive and rapid response. But this was not forthcoming. It was well into January before the leaders of the various unions met. And then the main line of march was a propaganda campaign aimed at explaining the attack to the public.

While this is very good and should be supported it is not the main task for the union leaders. In a widely scattered membership like that at London Transport a clear central lead is

Fares Fightback Calendar

Wednesday 10 March

● One day strike of London Transport workforce

Thursday 11 March

● GLC mass lobby of parliament from 2pm. Meetings in Central Hall at 3pm and 6pm

Friday 12 March

● It's worse for women! Special women's meeting on fares. Central Hall, Westminster, 7.30pm. Speakers: Jo Richardson MP; Valerie Wise, GLC; Chris Goff, woman guard; Julia Stone, bus conductor; Sarah Roeloffs, Women's Fare Fight.

Saturday 13 March

● Keep Fares Fair; rally and entertainment from 1pm at County Hall.

South Yorkshire transport authority has, under mass pressure, agreed to keep the fares frozen at 1975 prices. In real terms this is equivalent to virtually halving the fares up to 1979.



London Labour in conference

By Tessa van Gelderen

'I GIVE total support to any industrial action London Transport workers may take in defence of their jobs,' said GLC leader Ken Livingstone denouncing the lies of the Standard at the London Labour Party annual meeting last weekend.

It was a conference where the left quietly consolidated its position — in most instances.

Attempts by the electricians' union to elect the party leader by individual ballot were laughed out of court. So was a move not to support the endorsement of Bermondsey candidate Peter Tatchell.

National executive member, Judith Hart, did not endear herself to conference when she called the Tatchell affair 'a hiccup which could be ironed out'.

Women's issues had a surprisingly high profile throughout the conference: representation of women in the party, the inadequacies of the Sex Discrimination Act, abortion and violence against women were all debated. Most controversial was the proposal which was eventually passed on the 'mandatory inclusion of women on all parliamentary shortlists'. There were more women delegates and speakers, and fewer unchallenged, sexist remarks.

But as usual at Labour Party conferences, when the stakes are high the block vote of some of the trade unions acts as a dead hand on party militancy.

So what could have been the most important and exciting debate on the issue of transport was woolly and next-to-useless. The National Union of Railwaymen had ensured that no meaningful attempts to direct labour movement action to defeat the Law Lords decision were passed.

But a debate on how to defeat Heseltine opened up the discussion on the lead Labour councils should give in defeating Tory policies. The composite resolution that was moved, although containing many important proposals, was opposed by Socialist Challenge supporters because it stated that Labour councillors were not expected to 'embark on any course of action which is clearly contrary to law'. Despite the executive's recommendation to support it, many hands were raised against.

It was around the burning issues facing the working class that the conference in the main turned its attention. Although the Staffa dispute is now over, a resolution to stop the loss of jobs from London was passed.

But as Frank Gorton from Hackney North pointed out words are not enough. 'Staffa failed to become a central question for the labour movement in London. If the workers had won,' he said, 'it would have changed the relationship of forces in London.'

But as with all such conferences the key thing is not so much what is passed, but how the Labour Party in London will carry out the fight against Thatcher and the continuing witch-hunt inside the party.

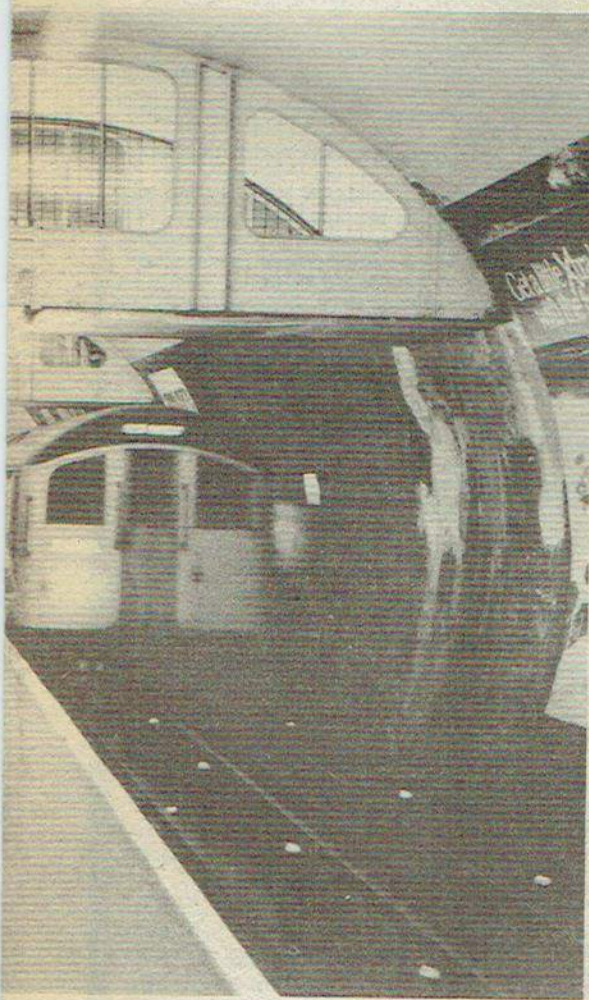
B'ham LP Public Meeting

Wednesday 24 March
Digbeth Civic Hall

Stop the witch-hunt
For a Labour victory

Speakers

Albert Bore, prospective MP for Ladywood
Tariq Ali,
Peter Tatchell
and PWA representative



Y ON THE FARES!

Women's Rights

WOMEN MINERS CAN DIG IT, TOO!

'We'll all fight together against the company'

AS **Mary Zinns**, a woman miner from the USA, goes around the country as part of a speaking tour sponsored by Socialist Challenge and Revolution, the socialist paper for youth, she spoke to **Judith Arkwright** about what it's like to work a 'man's' job.

WHEN I got hired, there were just about 20 women, now there are over 30 women and 500 men at Bethlehem's No 58 mine.

Women at the mine perform all kinds of jobs, from mechanic and roof bolting to shuttle car operators and general labourers.

Most of us had to fight management to receive training and get the opportunity to run various kinds of machinery.

We found that while, at first, some of the men were skeptical the union and our brothers in the union have proved to be our biggest defenders against any company harassment.

Over 3,000 women are now working underground

in the States. The reason women are going underground is the same reason men do — to make a living.

All kinds of women have jobs in the mines: some are just out of high school and some are grandmothers; there's married women and single women; women with children and women without children; small women who weigh less than 90 pounds and large women.

It's a very real cross section of the women who live in the coal fields.

In those coal fields where the companies have consciously kept out other industry, fewer women have jobs than in other parts of the country.

The only jobs available for women are minimum wage jobs, working in a restaurant, a sewing factory or as a store clerk.

Some women fought their way into the coal mines to make a decent wage.

The first women were hired in 1973. Many people at the time said that these women were stealing jobs from men and that they should stay home.

But you don't get any discount on your rent, gas, food or electricity bill because you're a woman.

It was said that the mines were too dangerous for a woman to work in. But if the mines were too dangerous for women they were too dangerous for men.

Now that women have been working in the mines, we're establishing ourselves as a legitimate part of the workforce, that

we can do the work and we need the work to survive just like the men.

In 1979, the United Mineworkers of America finally recognised this, and was the first industrial union in the country to hold a national conference of its women members.

This conference reflected the fact that women were an important part of the union, and that women were accepted as co-workers by the men in the mines. It also showed that the bosses — who had not wanted to hire us in the first place — continued to harass and discriminate against women on the job and consequently one of the duties that the union assumed was to defend all its members.

Instead of the men against the women, or whites against blacks we would all fight together against the company.



Left: **Mary Zinns**. Above: women miners from a calendar 'Coalmining Women 1982' produced by the Coal Employment Project.



Photo: GM COOKSON

Meet Mary Zinns

GREAT interest has greeted Mary Zinns as she started her tour of Britain discussing her fight to become a woman miner and the right of women to break into so-called men's jobs.

Mary is planning to meet miners around the country and will be going down Maltby pit in Rotherham.

She is lined up to talk with Joan Lestor, Shadow Minister for Women's Affairs and other MPs at the House of Commons and will be discussing with miners' leaders in Yorkshire.

Make sure you meet Mary at one of the following events.

EDINBURGH — Thursday 11 March, Chaplaincy Centre, Edinburgh University, Bristo St at 7.30pm.

LONDON — Friday 12 March, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, off Euston Road, opposite St Pancras Station. See ad this page.

MANSFIELD — Sunday 14 March, Civic Theatre Lounge at 3.30pm.

BARNESLEY — Monday 15 March, Northern College at 5pm.

SHEFFIELD — Tuesday 16 March, Womens Right to Work Rally, 7.30pm at Victoria Hall, speakers include Blanche Flannery, secretary of working womens subcommittee of Sheffield Trades Council.

WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH, SC Forum at 7.30pm at Burn Greave, Vestry Hall, Burn Greaves Road.

SOUTHAMPTON — Thursday 18 March, Conference Room, Civic Centre at 7.45pm.

BOURNEMOUTH — Friday 19 March, fringe meeting at Women's TUC.

For further details phone Judith Arkwright at 01-359 8371.

Plessey action

By Alan Freeman

MORE than 12,000 Plessey workers took part in a one-hour stoppage last Friday 5 March in support of the occupation at the company's Bathgate factory.

The support strike followed the victory scored by the occupying workforce in defeating a court order requiring them to leave the factory. This was followed on Monday by a national demonstration outside Plessey's London headquarters and a lobby of parliament.

Militant action of this kind is what has led to the court victory. The judge who withdrew the court order — Lord Kincaid — was the same one who issued it in the first place! The company is appealing against the judgement.

Although the verdict was an important victory,

the judge used the occasion to demand changes in the law of the kind being proposed in Tebbit's new 'Employment' Bill. So much for 'non-political' courts! As convenor George Wilson points out, the battle will be won through the industrial struggle, not by relying on any favours from court officials.

Plessey is set to make big money from the electronics revolution — and from denationalisation. Last year it made £100 million in profits. Yet it is one of 25 companies which have been urging Thatcher not to reflate the



Photo: MORNING STAR

economy.

Its actions give the lie that unemployment is needed for economic survival. For Plessey management and their ilk, unemployment is a

weapon to defeat their workers.

The strike, which brought a 100 per cent support from Plessey's Nottingham and Liverpool plants, is to be followed up

by further solidarity action.

Send donations and messages of support to Mary Murphy, 30 Main Street, Fauldhouse, West Lothian.

Peter Huntingford speaks out

'I'm for women controlling their lives'

FOLLOWING the dropping of the investigation into **Professor Peter Huntingford** by the Director of Public Prosecutions, **Judith Arkwright** spoke to Peter about the interpretation of the 1967 Abortion Act now.

JA: Why do you think the Director of Public Prosecutions decided to back off?

PH: They didn't think they would have a chance of succeeding with the prosecution. I have always felt that my defence was strong — I have never broken the regulations.

They tried to test a statistical argument and they failed. That is, that it is always two to three times safer to have an abortion than to continue a pregnancy. They couldn't refute this fact.

They've tried to whitewash this. They've tried to say I recanted... I

didn't recant. The reason the DPP did not take up the challenge is because he changed his mind — and I didn't.

I am not surprised by the Attorney General's decision, but how can he say there was a medical justification written on the form when there was not?

There could be a bill to change the grounds for abortion as a result of this — but I don't think it would be successful even with this parliament.

If they can't get changes like time limits through parliament then they won't be able to get that through, although there's no doubt they'll keep on trying.

JA: In your statements to the press you have claimed that the dropping of the prosecutions means that you can operate abortion on demand. But do you really think that abortion on demand exists under the 1967 Act?

The National Abortion Campaign has always argued that a

woman's right to choose will not really exist until all control by doctors is removed.

PH: I don't believe that any law will change the attitudes of doctors. Women have to control their own bodies. But I can't persuade other doctors — only women themselves can do this.

I think the law gives abortion on demand — if it does not challenge me and prosecute me in what I am doing.

I'm not for abortions. I'm for women doing what they want to do — having children when they want to, controlling their lives.

JA: How do you feel about those who criticised you for taking the stand which you did?

PH: I did what I felt I had to do — it's just my job. If I hadn't done it then someone else would have had to — because the wedge would have been driven in.

When in the next session of parlia-

ment someone brings in an anti-abortion bill (as I'm sure they will do) then they'll do it on the basis that I got away with too much.

But our side is stronger as a result of this. In my mailbag the pressure on this issue has been huge. I have had letters from individuals and groups telling me what they're doing — this will all be saved up on our side.

JA: Do you see the outcome of this as a victory for our side?

PH: It's only a partial victory in the sense that the powers-that-be have not admitted openly what they are doing. It's a real Kafka situation and the aim is to confuse.

However, I would have thought that the regulations regarding notification for abortions is in tatters — there is literally no point in asking for the form to be filled in. They claimed they needed it to collect statistics but they could do this another way and without naming the woman.

Stop the missiles

Trident can be stopped

By Martin Meteyard

THE TORIES are to spend £10 billion on Scotland. Does this mean an end to the present wave of redundancies and social service cut-backs? Unfortunately not.

Ten billion pounds could help to rebuild the shattered lives of hundreds of thousands of working people. But its intended use threatens the lives of us all. For it will be spent on the latest and most dangerous escalation of the nuclear arms drive —

Trident.

Trident is four nuclear submarines each carrying 16 D5 missiles, each with fourteen independently-targeted warheads. That's a staggering total of 896 potential targets, compared with 64 for the present Polaris submarine.

Common sense — and a calculator — will tell you this is a fourteen-fold increase. But the Ministry of Defence begs to differ. According to its crazy logic, the number of 'systems' or submarines will remain the same — so there's no increase!

Yet at the same time it insists on a seven-fold expansion of the naval base at Coulport to cope with Trident. And it won't hold

an inquiry to justify this because 'it would be too long drawn out'. So much for the democracy which Trident is supposedly needed to defend.

But then democracy isn't what motivates Reagan and Thatcher, for all their bleatings over Poland. Their concern is to wage war on all who are fighting for an end to the oppression and exploitation of the imperialist

system.

The gaff was blown on what's really at stake over Trident by *Sunday Times* correspondent John Connell in a front page article on 21 February.

Connell reported that the US is prepared to make a string of concessions on price and manufacturing to persuade the Tories to go ahead with the D5 version of Trident. What it expects in return is quite

simple: British support for its aggressive foreign policy.

As one source explained to Connell: 'This attitude of the administration...is conditioned by the way the UK acts in the wider defence interests of the Alliance and the US.'

More crudely, it was put to Connell that the Trident deal meant agreement by Britain to undertake 'other military activities

which find favour in the eyes of the American administration and Congress.'

Mentioned in this connection were the British frigates and maritime craft on patrol in the Gulf of Oman. But examples abound. The latest is participation of British ships in Operation Sea Pass off the coast of C

There's just one problem for Reagan, Thatcher in all this: they can't get working people to go along with their schemes.

The latest public opinion, reported by the programme *Weekend World*, on 28 February shows 63 per cent opposed to buying Trident. Scotland, feelings are running even higher, with a recent poll indicating a majority in favour of unilateral disarmament to get rid of nuclear weapons altogether.

Organising this movement to make sure Trident never happens is the task taken on by the Scottish Campaign Against Trident (SCAT), set up last year at the initiative of CND activists to focus public attention on the issue. The stress is on mass action and labour movement support, as is shown by two major activities SCAT is organising in the coming months.

The first is a trade union conference on Saturday 20 March from 11am to 2pm in The G Halls, Glasgow. Sponsors include the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), AUEW-TASS, the Scottish NUM, the Royce shop stewards committee, and the Tobacco Workers Union; and debate will be led off by Labour disarmament spokesperson David Davies MP.

March

All trade unionists welcome, and the intention is to allow plenty of contributions from the floor in order to stimulate discussion and organisation in the workplaces.

Three weeks later, Saturday 10 April, SCAT is organising its first mass demonstration against Trident. This is also in Glasgow, assembling at Blythswood Square 10.30am to march to a rally on Glasgow Green at noon.

These two actions could be the first steps in building a movement which really has the power to stop Trident. Already further challenge to government's plans is being mounted by the local authorities, who propose to hold their own official public inquiry into Trident in the autumn. Initial sponsors include Strathclyde Regional Council, and Dumbartonshire, Glasgow and Renfrew District Councils.

If this opposition could be developed to the point where all work on the subject is made impossible, then the way is open to inflict a stunning defeat on the Tories and their backers in Washington.

For further details contact SCAT, 420 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow (tel 041-332 3141).

For a Reagan-free Europe

By Bob Pennington

THE GODFATHER of world imperialism, Ronald Reagan, comes to Britain on 7 June. He must be given a massive thumbs down sign by the labour movement.

It is certain that when Reagan goes to Germany and France as part of the same tour hundreds of thousands of people will protest against him. We must therefore make sure that the growing anti-war movement in this country joins with our brothers and sisters in Europe in an enormous demonstration of international solidarity.

This can spell out a world-wide message which shows that the war plans of the imperialists can not only be resisted, but can be defeated by the organised action of the working class and its allies.

Last year's CND national conference voted for an international day of action in 1982. Unfortunately, this ended up as a march and demonstration on 6 June at Greenham Common.

Reagan's visit has overcome the problem of organising coordinated international action, as there is no doubt that wherever he goes in Europe he will inspire the revulsion and anger of millions of people.

Every thinking person knows that Reagan

is visiting Europe to line up his lackeys. He wants a bigger arms commitment from Thatcher and her cabinet. He wants more support for his counter-revolutionary policies in the Caribbean and Central America.

What is more he will get what he wants from the Tory Cabinet unless a mass resistance is built that can stop them.

Clearly, CND should follow the lead of the European peace movements and switch its demonstration from Greenham Common and set itself the objective of bringing the streets of London to a complete halt if Reagan gets here on 7 June.

The TUC and the Labour Party must put into practice their conference policies for unilateralism. They must demand that Thatcher calls off the visit of this missile gangster. In the House of Commons, the Labour MPs should demand that he does not come to Britain.

The TUC should call on its members at the airports to put a complete embargo on any plane carrying Reagan



Reagan's war games threaten us all

and his crew. Of course these are drastic measures, Mr Foot will probably complain that they are anti-parliamentarian. True enough.

But we are going to need very drastic measures indeed if we are going to stop the imperialists frying millions of people to a cinder.

Let us start now to campaign against Reagan's visit. Let's ensure that if he does come he is greeted with such a show of hostility that he realises his war

plans will be opposed by millions and millions of people.

In every CND branch, in every trades union branch and trades council, in every Labour Party and every anti-imperialist solidarity committee we must begin to start building a movement that can surpass even the gigantic

demonstration of October 1981.

Benn is putting down a Bill in the House of Commons for a nuclear-free Britain. Good, we support that. Let him now join in building a mass movement that can make sure we have a 'Reagan-free Europe'.

Benn launches Bill against US bases

By Davy Jones

TONY BENN has launched a new Bill in parliament aimed at banning all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons from British soil.

The Foreign Nuclear Chemical and Biological Bases (Prohibition) Bill was launched on Thursday 4 March. It states that: 'It shall not be lawful for nuclear weapons owned or controlled by a foreign country or jointly controlled, to be sited in the United Kingdom.'

The Bill has the backing of 11 other unilateralist MPs and of CND, but not of Labour leader Michael Foot, although the Bill is clearly in line with Labour Party policy. There is no chance that parliament will pass the Bill which would make those guilty of operating nuclear bases liable to a minimum of five years in jail.

The fact that the Bill has been raised

in parliament at all shows the developing strength of the anti-nuclear movement in every area of life. Even in parliament itself CND now has 95 Labour MPs supporting it.

And the nuclear-free zone movement among local authorities is developing apace. Some 170 local authorities have backed the movement, which received its biggest boost with the decision of Clwyd councillors to back the nuclear free zone idea. Their vote meant that every county council in Wales supported the movement, making Wales the first 'nuclear-free country' in Europe.

The Labour Party and the unions should be forced to back Benn's Bill and the nuclear-free zone movement. They can make a start by campaigning to keep Ronald Reagan, the biggest war-monger of them all, out of Britain.



A lett

The following is a letter sent by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador to President Ronald Reagan on January 18. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.

Mr President:

We have read with care your year-end message to the American people, in which you refer to efforts toward world peace, and more specifically to the fact that 'our hearts are anguished for those who suffer oppression' and that 'Americans begin the year with a renewed commitment to our ideals and with the determination that peace will have to be preserved and that freedom for all men will prevail.'

We would like to point out to you, Mr President, that we Salvadorans have suffered centuries of oppression and are suffering right now from repression by a military dictatorship that has been in power, without interruption, for more than 50 years. Our struggle is against that dictatorship.

If your heart is anguished by oppression, we cannot see why it is precisely your administration that has become the principal support of the military/Christian Democracy regime in El Salvador.

Far from aiding our people's conquest of freedom, your administration has chosen to support a government that is responsible for more than 30,000 deaths in the short period of two years.

Who v

TODAY in El Salvador the armed fighters of the popular movement against the US-backed government call themselves the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Like the Sandinist revolutionaries of nearby Nicaragua, the people of El Salvador have named their movement after heroes of their national liberation struggle.

It is just over 50 years since Agustin Farabundo Marti was executed, at the age of 38, as the central leader of a general insurrection throughout the country.

Born to peasant parents of modest means in a remote mountain region close to the Pacific Coast, Marti's early friends were the children of the workers on his family's farm.

Recognising their son was a bright child, Marti's parents decided to send him to school in the town of Santa Tecla. He was an excellent student and graduated from high school in 1913 to go on to university to study law and social sciences.

Alienated from most of his fellow students at the university, most of whom came from wealthy families, Marti began to seek out the company of workers and to study the writings of Marx and Lenin. He became a revolutionary.

He took up the fight against the despotic rule of the Melendez-Quinones families who were in power between the years of 1913 and 1927. He preached the need for political unity of the peoples of Central America and earned a reputation as a courageous organiser and spokesman in every struggle against the dictatorship.

Before long he found himself in prison. When he was offered release, he refused to go free until other opponents of the regime were also released. Finally the government deported him to neighbouring Guatemala in 1920.

There he spent seven years in exile. But he spent this time participating in the revolutionary movement in that country, working often as an agricultural labourer. Wherever he worked, he was a tireless agitator and socialist propagandist.

What is the FMLN?

EL SALVADOR'S struggle against military dictatorship is spearheaded by four revolutionary organisations each of which has its own armed wing.

The armed forces of the revolution jointly make up the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front. The three strongest revolutionary organisations, which have carried the main responsibility for the struggle, are the Revolutionary People's Bloc (BPR), the United People's Action Front (FAPU), and the Popular Leagues of 28 January (LP-28).

Their armed wings are respectively the Farabundo Marti People's Liberation Forces (FPL), the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP). The fourth, smaller revolutionary organisation is the Central American Revolutionary People's Army (PRTC).

In addition to these forces the National Democratic Union, the legal front of the Communist Party, is integrated into the FMLN after having previously supported the Duarte junta. The most prestigious leader of the FMLN is Cayetano Carpio, one of the signatories of the letter to Reagan published on these pages.

The FMLN has formed a political front against the dictatorship with other forces including the social democrats and progressive sectors of the Christian Democracy called the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). But the forces doing the fighting are the revolutionaries of the FMLN.

The revolutionary character of the Salvadoran leadership is confirmed by the main points of the FMLN's programme. These include the nationalisation of the main means of production, the disbandment of the army and the creation of a people's army, expropriation of the big landed estates and the democratic self-organisation of the masses.

EL SALVADOR SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATION

To coincide with the government's fraudulent elections
Sunday 28 March
Assemble Speakers Corner 1 pm
March to rally in Trafalgar Square



Freedom fighters of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front

er from the FMLN to Reagan-

What then is the world peace you seek, if at the same time you offer military aid to a repressive government? The military and political assistance your government has provided to the Salvadoran junta has brought about, among other things, the prolonging of the war and the entrenchment in the seat of power of the most repressive elements of the Salvadoran government — those who do not even respect the lives of US citizens, as demonstrated by the murder of the four women religious workers in 1980.

The recent agreement to train 1600 troops from the junta's army at US bases confirms to us that your objective is not peace, but war — against our people.

Your administration has not only sent war material and military advisers, but is also helping to plan the strategy of extermination being carried out against our people. This is exactly what Under-Secretary of Defense Ikle outlined in his recent testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs.

As part of this 'scorched earth' policy, the population itself becomes a military target, especially those who live in areas near the fighting. And the painful experience of many massacres shows how little the sex, age, religious beliefs, or noncombatant status of these victims matters.

Barely a month ago, between December 7 and 17, in Morazan province, the army systematically killed more than 1000 peasants, children, women, and old people. They were butchered, machine-gunned, or burned alive by the Atlacatl Brigade, which was trained and equipped with the military aid from your administration.

The Salvadoran people, who so greatly admire the progressive and democratic ideals of the people of the United States, cannot understand why you insist on pledging your support to a genocidal government. We cannot understand why the hard-earned dollars of US tax-payers go to support programmes of extermination instead of furthering peace and respect for human rights.

Your claims that the war in El Salvador is simply an aspect of the confrontation between your government and that of the Soviet Union seems to us to have nothing to do with the reality in our country. Salvadorans have joined the struggle because of the poverty and repression imposed on them by the oligarchy and the military. We have taken up arms not because we love war, but rather because one military regime after another has closed off all democratic avenues for change and has forced us to make use of our legitimate right to rebellion.

It is the Salvadorans and Salvadorans alone who struggle daily

against the dictatorship. We want to change the old and unjust social structures. The 30,000 dead were neither Russians nor Cubans. They were Salvadorans who yearned to live in peace and dignity.



The only outside forces in this conflict are the US advisers your government has sent. Portraying our war as part of an East-West conflict can only lead to its regionalisation and to a growing intervention by your country. This would cause still more suffering for the Salvadoran people,

as well as for the people of the United States.

Your claiming that the solution to the Salvadoran conflict is through elections in March also has nothing to do with reality. How can a democratic process be guaranteed amid indiscriminate repression? If you are the one who decides the destiny of the United States, it is because you are in office by virtue of free elections. Americans went to the polls in peace, and this is the undeniable precondition for a people to be able to elect its leaders.

The Salvadoran government, far from creating the indispensable conditions for achieving such peace, is pushing ahead with a war of extermination against our people. These elections, then, are no solution, but are simply one more farce that the military government has imposed on our people.

Mr President, the confidence your message expressed in preserving world peace needs to take concrete expression.

In El Salvador, our Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front has made a public and generous offer to undertake peace talks that could lead to ending the war and building a democratic and just social order for all Salvadorans. The great majority of the international com-

munity has supported our proposal for a political solution, as is shown by the French-Mexican communique and the motion adopted by the UN General Assembly last December 16.

Our proposal calls for negotiations covering all topics. We are ready at a moment's notice to begin working out an agenda mutually agreeable to all parties, without any preconditions, in the presence of witnesses from other governments, and with the Salvadoran people fully informed about the progress towards a political solution. This is our contribution to peace, but we have noted your administration's opposition to a political solution.

What we have said leads us to respectfully request that you change your policy toward El Salvador. We only ask for the right to resolve our own problems by ourselves without foreign interference.

If, in this new year, your government is interested in and willing to pursue peace in the world, it has the chance to achieve such peace in El Salvador by dropping its opposition to a political solution and instead seeking friendly and just relations between our two peoples.

Sincerely,
Salvador Cayetano Carpio, Joaquin Villalobos, Ferman Cienfuegos, Shafik Jorge Handal, Roberto Roca

was Farabundo Marti?

By Nita Keig

In 1926, less than two years before his return to his own country, Marti participated in the formation of the Communist Party of Central America which drew together many worker and peasant leaders from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

By the time he returned to El Salvador in 1928 there was a war raging in Nicaragua between the popular forces led by Augusto Cesar Sandino and troops of the United States, backing up the ruling oligarchy.

Farabundo Marti and a handful of other Salvadoran revolutionary leaders went to Nicaragua to fight with Sandino, known as the 'General of Free Men', and inspired many other Salvadorans to follow suit.

Marti became Sandino's personal secretary and a colonel in his general staff. He was responsible for writing to the governments of many Latin American countries and publicising the aims and intentions of the Nicaraguan revolutionary fighters.

Much of this work was done in the field and amid heavy bombing by US planes. It was here that Marti often switched weapons and made famous the phrase: 'When history can't be written with a pen, it must be written with a rifle.'

Meanwhile the situation was com-

ing to a head in his own country with the plight of the population worsened by the onset of the severe economic depression in the capitalist world at that time. Marti returned.

As the workers and peasants began to revolt, the government hit back with savage repression and persecution of the leaders of the movement.

Marti was arrested for his work at this time and along with another revolutionary leader, Ismael Hernandez, went on a hunger strike.

Because the government feared the repercussions if he died, he was once again deported and, because no other country would accept him, spent several weeks aboard the steamship 'Venezuela'.

He jumped ship in Nicaragua, and after swimming ashore, finally made his way back to El Salvador in February, 1933.

Within three months he was on hunger strike in prison again, this time sparking off massive protests and demonstrations for his release. Many of these protests were savagely repressed and resulted in many

deaths.

He was released and deported blindfolded and barefoot, to Guatemala from where he immediately returned.

He even went back to the garrison where he had been imprisoned to visit and give heart to his comrades still inside.

The mass dissatisfaction and anger had reached a high level by the beginning of 1932 resulting from the extreme poverty, hunger and unrestrained massacres being carried out by the dictatorship.

A call for a general insurrection was made but days before it broke out Marti was arrested. Along with two other comrades he was sentenced to death and executed on 1 February.

The rage of the Salvadoran people overflowed. The insurrection was put down at the cost of over 30,000 lives.

This is the struggle that is being continued today. Fifty years later the struggle in El Salvador is being carried on by sons and daughters of Farabundo Marti who see in his great example the courage, daring, and resolution that is necessary to finally win their freedom.

Reprinted from the Australian Trotskyist paper *Direct Action*.



Salvadoran 'defence' minister (centre) Garcia after helicopter raid

Grenada: three years of revolution

By Paul Lawson

THREE YEARS ago, on 13 March 1979, the people of the Caribbean island of Grenada ended the brutal dictatorship of Eric Gairy and began the construction of a free Grenada.

Under the leadership of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) the people of Grenada for the first time in 400 years finally took their destiny into their own hands.

Grenada is a small country with a population of only 110,000. It faces many difficulties — both economic backwardness and the hostility of US imperialism. But the achievements of the revolution have already been formidable.

Since the revolution the self-

organisation of the masses has developed apace. Among the mass organisations that have been established are the National Youth Organisation and the National Womens Organisation.

Foremost has been the establishment of the system of 'people's democracy' which allows the vast majority of Grenadians to participate in the running of their country.

One of the first actions of the revolutionary government was the passing of the Trade Union Recognition Act. Now, about 80 per cent of the workforce has joined the trade unions.

Immediate measures have been taken to raise the living standards of the people. The cost of basic food items has been kept

down. Cheap fertilisers have been provided for farmers. Housing materials are provided either free or at low interest rates to workers and farmers. The condition of women has been rapidly improved: they receive equal pay for equal work and paid maternity leave.

Like the Sandinista government in Nicaragua the New Jewel Movement recognised that education is a vital part of the political mobilisation of the people. The newly-established Centre for Popular Education mobilised thousands of volunteer teachers to wipe out the remaining illiteracy. A new nationwide scheme of adult education is well under way.

Despite these advances, the

economic difficulties of the island remain very grave. When Gairy was overthrown unemployment was about 50 per cent. As a first attempt to tackle this, Grenada has developed the 'idle lands for idle hands scheme' to cultivate previously unused land, using newly-formed agricultural co-operatives.

Last year the first fruit canning plant and a fish processing plant were opened. One of the most ambitious projects is the building of the island's first international airport. Much of the aid for this project, like the aid for the free health care and other projects, has been provided by the Cuban government.

As the people of Grenada celebrate three years of progress

of their revolution, they designated 1982 as the 'Year of Economic Reconstruction'. Workplace will be setting up production committees to set up monitor production targets.

Hand-in-hand with the struggle for production is the need to defend the revolution. Grenada has been the target for numerous threats from the United States. Imperialism regards the example of the revolution as a threat to hold over the Caribbean.

That's why the people of Grenada are spending the weeks before the anniversary celebrations engaging in training manoeuvres to ensure that an invasion will be met with the unrelenting resistance of the Grenadian people.

Under Review

Great black music—



Bradford and London

Last week *Melody Maker* became the last big commercial music biz weekly to drop jazz from its pages. It is ironic that at the same time the music is enjoying a worldwide resurgence in popularity, not least among young audiences tired of the mass-produced pulp the recording industry is pushing so hard these days.

This weekend, 13/14 March, the Bradford International Jazz festival, at Bradford University, brings together an impressive array of styles from Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus to jazz rock and the traditional and free jazz blend of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. During the week of 15 March, London's Roundhouse hosts another all-star Camden Jazz week, also featuring the Art Ensemble.

SKIP LASZLO looks at the Chicago connection in both festivals.

The Art Ensemble of Chicago call this 'Great Black Music, ancient to the future,' and their wide grasp of its sources from African drum choirs, blues and gospel music to the ages of jazz, and West Indian styles make their performances a constant joy. Appearing at both Bradford (Sunday night) and Camden (Monday), the

Art Ensemble synthesise the varied but distinct spirit of each festival.

The Art Ensemble maintain a collective freshness by playing individually for half the year, often featuring in each other's bands and appearing with a wide range of other performers and styles. When together, their music is a blend of

total collective improvisation and an array of musical flavours from the roots of Black and European music. The stage is filled with different saxophones, percussion instruments and African horns and stringed instruments.

They are among the forerunners of the modern trend among jazz players who control their own product in the recording studio and on stage.

The Art Ensemble is one of many groups to grow out of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) formed in 1965 to promote Black cultural identity and to encourage and bring together musicians developing new, freer Black music. It was the forerunner to many such collectives in both the US and Europe but it is also the longest surviving and probably the most influential.

The driving force and a co-founder of the AACM was Muhal Richard Abrams, and his debut in this country on Tuesday night at Camden is a long overdue treat not to be missed.

Pianist Abrams is one of the great practitioners of free jazz and extended improvisation. His band includes the innovative percussionist Andrew Cyrille.

The Bradford festival kicks off Friday with a night of Duke Ellington classics played by a wonderful collection of British jazz musicians in Stan Tracey's Big Band, and the music of radical bassist Charles Mingus featuring many of the late great's previous collaborators collected in the Mingus Dynasty. Saturday features jazzrock and latin jazz, with the Art Ensemble on Sunday.

Camden opens on Monday with the Art

Ensemble and runs nightly to Saturday. It features some of the veterans of the developments of the late '50s and early '60s in an all-star band on Wednesday. Dexter Gordon, one of the lasting sources of big-sound saxophone appears on Saturday.

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FOYLE'S DISPUTE benefit Fri 12 March featuring the Papers and the Kin Beacon Band at the Seven Dials club, Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2. Tickets - £1.75 (includes one free drink) £1.25 unwaged; 7pm-12pm. Tickets on the door or from left bookshops.

EAST LONDON TOM. In aid of Irish political prisoners. The Republic plus Chat's Arkestra plus disco. Thurs 25 March 8pm. £1.50 or 75p unwaged.

Socialist Challenge Events

SCHOOL on women's oppression and the fight to build a women's movement. Sponsored by Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth. 13/14 March. County Hall, Waterloo, SE1. Creche provided. Open to all Socialist Challenge supporters. Tickets: £3 for rally and school. Write to J Arkwright, PO Box 50, London N1.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE RALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY
 Fri 12 March Camden Centre off Euston Rd. Doors open 5.30pm. Meeting starts 7.30pm. Invited speakers include: Mary Zinn - United Mineworkers of America, Socialist Workers Party; speaker from Nicaraguan women's movement. Bookstalls and displays on show. Light refreshments. Entrance £1: 50p unwaged.

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge: Revolution meeting Thur 18 March, 7.30pm; Crisis in British trade unions. At Socialist Centre, High St

NATIONAL sales day for Socialist Challenge Sat 3 April

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge: Revolution. Reunite Thatcher Hands Off Central America and Caribbean. Fri 26 March, 7.30pm, Family Centre, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16. Speakers: El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and New Jewel Movement.

Brecht nil, Bowie nil

By Simon Lockwood

BERTHOLD Brecht has contributed more to Marxist culture than anyone else. His thinking was infinitely subtle. Yet the BBC in presenting his play, *Baal*, on television (2 March), diluted its impact to such an extent that it became no more than a vehicle for David Bowie's self-glorification.

Baal was Brecht's first play. Though groundbreaking at the time, the stunning political clarity of his later work is by no means fully developed. Nonetheless, the whole BBC production amounted to a cynical betrayal of Brecht's intentions.

The idea of Bowie appearing in the play at all is a monstrous undermining of Brecht's democratic theatre. How can we possibly get any critical distance from *Baal*'s characters when played by a real-life hero? To suggest that the play gets additional irony from this play is simply pulling wool over one's eyes.

The title role character was meant to induce

'I hope in *Baal* I've avoided one common artistic bloomer, that of trying to carry people away.

The spectators 'splendid isolation' is left intact; he is not fobbed off with

watches himself in two simultaneous versions. A higher type of interest can be got from making comparisons from whatever is different, amazing, impossible to take in as a whole.

Brecht was fundamentally opposed to naturalistic theatre, that is, a theatre which attempted to present a 'realistic' portrayal of the world. Yet over half the teleplay focussed on (hopelessly studio-bound) Dickensian sets.

Script

To make matters far worse, the cast are asked to make a naturalistic reading of the script which is written with opposite intentions. The result was that no-one ever sounded like they were talking to anyone else.

Not of course that David Bowie could ever sound like he was talking to anyone else. Exhibiting

his full Y to Z acting range he managed to snuff any life out of the part before the play was two minutes old. Only in the closing death scene did the comic relief of some belated over acting add any energy to the role. Seeing that *Baal* was the centre piece of every scene this was a bit of a drawback.

Video

Not that Bowie is going to be worried by any of this. Sauntering through metaphysical split screen landscapes - a typically ridiculous attempt to display a 'Brechtian' influence - like a decaying gunslinger, he handled it as if it was a promotional video for Top of the Pops. He even managed some earnest Antony Newley vocalising over his own banjo chords.

I await with interest the furtherance of Mr Bowie's acting developing in the forthcoming *Carry on Dentist*.



revilement from the audience - not identification. Brecht explained this in a 1922 notebook entry:

an invitation to feel sympathetic, to fuse with the hero and seem significant and indestructible as he

SOLIDARNOSĆ: 'the struggle continues'

THREE MONTHS AGO the Polish authorities moved to smash Solidarnosc and bring an end to the independent workers' movement. DAVY ONES assesses the outcome of the recent central committee meeting of the Polish Communist Party which discussed the next steps of consolidating the rule of the bureaucrats.

'Stabilisation is setting in, but the struggle continues': this neat formula General Jaruzelski when he met President Brezhnev in the Kremlin last week, sums up the state of the contest between the bureaucrats and the workers in Poland. The latest round has definitely gone to the bureaucrats but they know that the outcome of the fight as a whole is still uncertain.

The Polish CP Central Committee — every shade of opinion, hardline and liberal — fully backed martial law and the repression against Solidarnosc on 25 February. Two CC members who might have been objected were conveniently expelled — Marian Winiarski from Torun for opposing martial law at a public forum, and Jan Jankowski from Warsaw University for refusing to save Solidarnosc.

Plank

Purging the party has merged as an important plank of the bureaucrats' strategy. Six provisional governors, 17 deputy governors, 160 mayors and heads of rural communities have already been sacked. Regional and departmental committees have been told to end all extra-statutory 'horizontal' structures and activities by the end of March; and hardliners such as Albin Siwak of the Politburo and Kociolek of the Warsaw party have called for a 'purge of the party from top to bottom'.

The bureaucrats have tried to win over the peasantry as a new base of support. They have increased the maximum permitted size of private farms from 50 to 250 acres in an attempt to undermine the solidarity between the poor peasants organised in Rural Solidarity and the workers' movement.

The repression has also been noticeably 'softer' on the academics and the liberal professions than on the workers, in an attempt to split the intellectuals off from Solidarnosc.

But the key lever for the bureaucrats to complete the process of defeating Solidarnosc is the role of the Church. Since the imposition of martial law the Catholic Church has acted as a consistent brake on the development of opposition to the repression. It is now putting enormous pressure on the Solidarnosc leaders, both those interned and those still free, to negotiate a 'compromise' with the authorities.

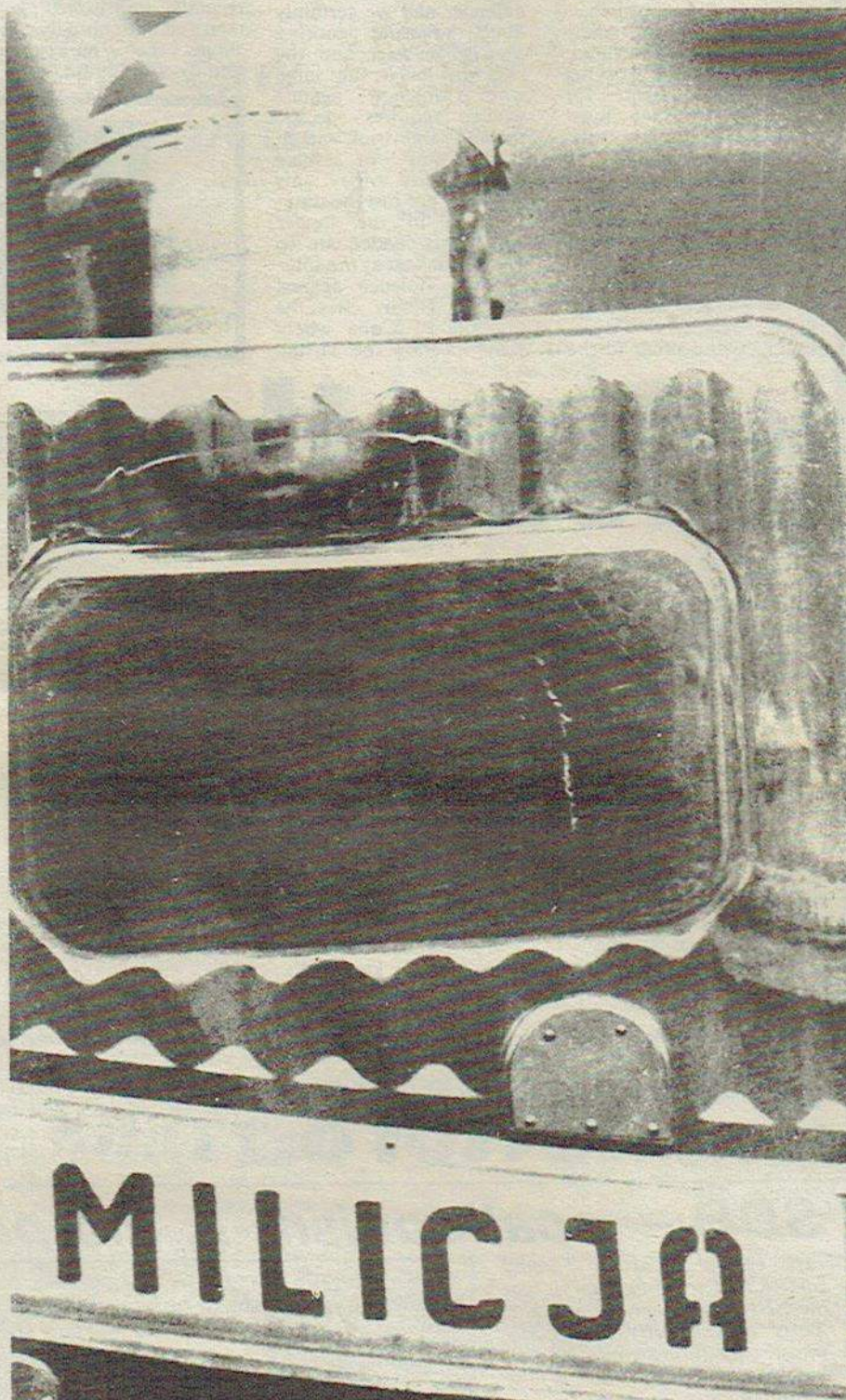
Terms

The terms of such a 'compromise' were spelt out by vice-premier Rakowski's draft proposal on trade union law published two weeks ago. It envisaged unions which explicitly rejected any political role, which agreed to the leading role of the party and the Polish constitution, and which were not organised on a geographical basis.

In case anyone had any illusions that this might have any resemblance to Solidarnosc, Jaruzelski's communique after his talks with Brezhnev added: 'Any attempt to resume actions aimed at causing economic disarray or resumption of anarchy ... will be cut short most resolutely.'

Advice

The authorities are desperately trying to persuade union leaders to heed the advice of the Church hierarchy and sections of the intellectuals to accept this 'new role' for the unions. Those resisting these pressures, especially those workers building the underground opposition,



Repression from the militia was the easy part for the regime: the political next steps will not be so easy.

are dealt with ruthlessly. Hundreds of Solidarnosc militants have now been jailed either for their activities before martial law or since.

The authorities launched a major intimidatory clampdown at the end of last month. In a two day period they checked 52,000 shops, 60,000 vehicles and 145,000 people in an attempt to track down underground Solidarnosc activists. Hundreds of people were arrested and charged.

The authorities have also succeeded in closing down a few of the local Solidarnosc bulletins and an 'underground organisation' in Brodnica near Torun. But Solidarnosc is reorganising itself. In Warsaw it has launched a weekly paper, *Tygodnik Mazowski*.

And Warsaw leader Zbigniew Bujak has issued

a new appeal to the Polish workers: 'Our objective is to revive the union activities, to free the internees, to re-engage the workers who have been sacked and to force the lifting of martial law.'

None of this will happen if the bureaucrats get their way. General Jaruzelski has reiterated his appeal to Solidarnosc internees to consider permanent emigration from the country: some 15 people are reported to have taken up his offer.

The strategy of the Polish rulers is therefore clear: no return of Solidarnosc, repression against the workers, establishment of a 'responsible' ie tame union, winning back the support of the intellectuals and of the farmers through a certain economic liberalisation. All this combined with a ruthless purge of the party

ranks to stamp out any attempt at going back to Solidarnosc. The bureaucrats cannot and will not tolerate an independent mass organisation of the working class which threatens their own power and privileges.

For Solidarnosc supporters within Poland the struggle now moves on to a higher political level. For the most politicised workers the balance sheet of martial law is equally clear: there can be no compromise with the bureaucracy.

Within Poland itself and outside Solidarnosc members are reorganising for the next round of the struggle. The central task for socialists in the West is to organise labour movement support for Solidarnosc so that the workers can win the next round and the whole contest.

Solidarnosc leader speaks in London

ZBIGNIEW KOWALEWSKI, a presidium member of Lodz Solidarnosc, will speak at the Labour Party rally on Poland at Central Hall Westminster on 16 March. Other speakers at the rally which begins at 7.30pm include Eric Heffer, Denis Healey, Joan Lester and Clive Jenkins. As the Labour Party has completely failed to publicise and mobilise support for the meeting, socialists in the London labour movement should pull out all the stops to build an audience for Kowalewski.

French author tour on Poland

JEAN-YVES POTEL, French Trotskyist and author of the new Pluto book *The Summer Before the Frost*, and Zbigniew Kowalewski from Lodz Solidarnosc, will speak at a series of meetings in Britain in two weeks time.

The Summer Before the Frost is the best revolutionary socialist analysis of the Polish events to have been published to date.

Tour dates so far:
Mon 22 March Oxford
Tue 23 March Birmingham
Wed 24 March Glasgow
Thu 25 March Manchester



Solidarity with Solidarnosc meetings

Nottingham: meeting called by Labour Movement Solidarity with Solidarnosc on Thur 11 March at 7.30 pm in TGWU offices, 259 Mansfield Rd. Speakers: Piotr Kozlowski of Solidarnosc trade union working group and Oliver Macdonald (*Labour Focus*).

Islington: Labour Party public meeting on Thur 11 March at 7.30 pm at Manor Gardens library, off Holloway Rd. Marek Garztecki of Solidarnosc trade union working group plus speakers from El Salvador and South Africa campaigns.

Sheffield: Polish Solidarity Committee Rally on Friday 12 March at 7.30pm in the City Memorial Hall. Speakers include: Piotr Kozlowski from Solidarnosc trade union working group, Peter Tatchell, Bernard Connelly, BSC Crafts Ctte, and Jean McCrindle, prospective parliamentary candidate for Hallam.

Brent: Labour Party public meeting on Wed 17 March at 7.30 pm in Harlesden primary school, Acton Lane, NW10. Speakers: Eric Heffer MP, Marek Garztecki of Solidarnosc trade union working group and Oliver Macdonald.

Oldham: Friday 19 March at 7.30pm. St. Andrews Hall off Middleton Road, Oldham. Speakers Piotr Kozlowski, Ursus tractor plant, Warsaw, Michael Meacher MP for Oldham West, and Jon Silberman, secretary of Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Campaign. Sponsored by Oldham East Labour Party.

Solidarity Committees with Solidarnosc

Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd, Glasgow G43. Ring 041-632 1839.

Edinburgh Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Edinburgh & District Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Jon Silberman, 51 Montrose House, Crete St, Oldham, Lancs. Ring 061-620 2885.

Leeds Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Dave Feickert, 28 Roundhay Mount, Leeds 8, Yorkshire. Ring 0532-490927.

Birmingham Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Roger Murray, 28 Blackford Road, Birmingham 11. Ring 021-773 5396.

Cardiff Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Mark Jenkins, 87 Beatty Ave, Cardiff. Ring 0222-764195.

Coventry Solidarity Committee, John Fisher c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd, Coventry.

Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Banbury Rd, Oxford. Ring 0865 58238.

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW11. Ring 01-458 1501.

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.

Polish Solidarity Committee, 69 Edinburgh Rd, London E13. Ring 01-422 2218 for London speakers, or 01-249 2665 for out of London.

Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in UK, 64 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London SW5. Ring 01-373 3492.

Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Co-operative Bank, 110 Leaman St, London E1.

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Leyland - the truth?

PATRICK Sikorski's article 'What happened at Leyland?' (25 February) sadly fails to adequately answer the question, in particular by omitting any explanation of why and how 'mass meetings voted for a return to work'. The truth is less simple.

The first mass meeting was decisive. It comprised 5,000 manual workers in Leyland, nearly half of all those on strike in Lancashire. This meeting voted by a clear majority to continue the strike, but immediately after a few hundred strongly protested the decision, demanding a return to work. Mick Coyne, a Communist Party member and chairman of the Strike Committee, wrongly conceded to this minority and declared the vote void. These events hung over the subsequent meetings and the resulting confusion meant they voted to return. Mick Coyne does not dispute this is what happened, nor does the following day's *Morning Star*.

Since all this was central to the collapse of the strike, why is none of it mentioned by Sikorski? The answer is not bad journalism but a deliberate glossing over and avoidance of the role of the Strike Committee and Mick Coyne, something consistent with Socialist Challenge's uncritical attitude to the Strike Committee throughout.

It is right to attack Boyd and Duffy, but that should not blind us to the real weakness of the factory-level leadership, which though CP-led was essentially very right wing. Not only did they never criticise the AUEW leadership, from the start they failed to offer any serious way forward to defeat Edwardes, most notably by strongly opposing a fight for support from the Leyland Cars Division. In fact they openly accepted management's viability argument, their prime concern being to 'return the company to profitability'.

While fully accepting that the Socialist Challenge supporters involved were largely invisible and entirely marginal to the strike's outcome, still revolutionaries surely have a duty to draw out the real lessons from struggles, even defeats. Instead Socialist Challenge has, yet again, chosen the path of adaptation to the workers' existing leadership. When that involves a group of heroic militants such as Laurence Scotts you come out usually on the right side. In Leyland you end up in the same boat as those who have sold out and who will do the same again if we let them.

PAT LALLY,
Socialist Organiser

Patrick Sikorski replies: Comrade Lally's letter catches Socialist Organiser out in their typically sectarian approach to politics. In the last paragraph they not only indict the local Leyland leadership for selling out but also Socialist Challenge:

The key test for any serious work inside the working class is to know 'which boat' you are in. For comrade Lally there was one boat containing Socialist Organiser and another containing the rest of the world.

This ensured that SO was cut off not just from the strike leadership but also from the activists in the strike. Their two supporters in the factory had, by the end of the dispute, ceased to read their paper and were publicly distancing themselves from it. This accounts for the stupid vehemence of the letter and talk about the 'invisibility' of Socialist Challenge supporters and so on.

It is not 'covering up' but is an elementary principle of class struggle to distinguish between the national bureaucracy and the local elected leadership — however inadequate they might be.

In this case, comrade Lally doesn't give serious consideration to the fact that the strike leadership at both Bathgate and Leyland openly defied the instructions of the executive and further that the Preston AUEW District Committee instructed its secretary Len Brindle to read out a motion to the mass meeting censuring Duffy and Boyd and fully supporting the recommendations to continue the strike.

Putting themselves outside of this camp led to a series of other sectarian blunders by SO.

First the comrades counterposed mobilising for the Leyland Action Conference in Birmingham to the first full Leyland Vehicle Combine meeting on the first Saturday of the dispute. The combine was attended by over 50 stewards from the national combine representing every factory in the group, the LAC was attended by 23 militants.

Secondly SO issued a Leyland Action Committee leaflet entitled 'Strike Bulletin'. For this they were rightly called to account by the Strike Committee ... not 'witch-hunted'. This added Socialist Worker-type substitutionism to their sectarianism.

Finally, when the joint Cars and Vehicles Combine met in the third week of the dispute, the SO intervention led by Alan Thornett was aimed almost exclusively at attacking the Leyland convenor Mick Coyne for not demanding immediate all out strike action. While this was clearly a necessary objective, it had to be campaigned for. The main problem with the combine decisions was that they were not acted upon vigorously as part of a campaign to win the necessary support and strengthen LV workers.

Contrary to the opinion of SO, the blame for the defeat first and foremost lies with the AUEW leadership, whose actions were clearly aimed at ending the strike, and whose record in BL has been one of support for Edwardes against the membership. In the LV strike this was the first line of divide and it was necessary for revolutionaries to be with the strike committee against Edwardes and his agents in the bureaucracy. Not to recognise this elementary fact was to fall into sectarian posturing, which, if it had any effect, would be damaging.

While it is also necessary to recognise the weaknesses of the strike leadership, this must be done in the context of (a) assisting the development of the strike, and (b) with the understanding that the recombination of the rank and file leadership of the class in Britain will be a long struggle to overcome the effects of a century of reformist domination and will require more from revolutionaries than sectarian denunciations of the rank and file leadership of the struggles.

A not unimportant factor in the present weakness of the working class is the failure of British Trotskyists to break with the sectarian traditions shown in your letter.

DENNY FITZPATRICK's letter (18 February) was right to condemn the 'hang 'em and flog 'em' brigade who demand stiffer sentences for rapists. The male-dominated legal system views rape as a crime against another man's property, not against women themselves. Their views are not so far removed from the laws of Ancient Assyria where the father of the raped woman could rape the wife of the rapist — an eye for an eye, but both eyes male!

Denny was also right to insist that rape is not an exceptional act. It is the logical conclusion of present social relations, the tip of the iceberg of male violence against women.

But the stark alternatives her letter offered, that: 'Either the working class must fight for socialism or they must back the status quo of stiffer sentences' ignores the need for specific proposals now. A long-term perspective is needed but we can't abstain on what to do at present about male violence.

When racist attacks are made, socialists don't just stand by and point to the

need for a future revolution, nor do they ignore and excuse racists as mere victims of the system. We call for anti-racist campaigns, support for black self-defence, and we certainly don't advocate ignoring Martin Webster and the like. In much the same way, violence against women requires specific forms of fightback and an examination of male responsibility for this violence, not just the state.

Even in the longer term, it is inadequate to offer socialism as the solution to violence against women. Denny cites the example of Cuba where statistics show the 'virtual

action now!

elimination of rape'. Have ideological conditions in Cuba really changed so much that women do not feel the same constraints about reporting rape as they do here? It is difficult to see how questions of sexuality have been solved in a society which until recently imprisoned gay men and undoubtedly continues their harassment and discrimination.

The Cuban Family Code may officially decree equal rights and responsibilities for raising children between women and men. But we should remember that the constitution of the USSR also declares complete equality; and yet this has little reality in the lives of Russian women. Nursery places are provided at the factory, but the form of

contraception they must use is abortion performed without anaesthetic, and Russian women are subjected to many other forms of violence and oppression.

Socialism focuses on the means of production. In discussing women's oppression, the forces of reproduction must also be examined. We must consider relations in the family as well as in the factory. Socialism can pave the way for women's liberation, but it cannot guarantee an end to women's oppression.

In taking up the question of violence against women, we must be clear about that.

JAN POLLOCK
London

DEBATE ON RAPE

prison the answer?

IN her article on rape, (4 February) Yvonne Taylor makes no useful proposal on what immediate steps should be taken against rapists. She is against all penalties, lumping them all together — long imprisonment, castration, execution — as if they were all the same thing. Will she please be more reasonable?

Rapists should not be treated harshly, she says, because this would not be 'humanitarian' (!) and would strengthen the right of the state to repress men who oppress women! But even a workers' state could not always be 'humanitarian', in the sense of 'kind', towards its enemies, though it might be

'humanitarian' in the sense of working for the good of humanity. It would have to deal drastically with some offenders, and rape is one of the worst crimes against humanity, which is more than half female.

We feminists say that rapists must be kept locked up, for the protection

of their victims and potential victims. Some socialists have said that women and girls should be kept locked up (kept at home) for their protection. We say that the aggressor, not the victim, should be kept under restraint. Moreover, the aggressor is frequently already in the home. So, prison for the assailant seems to be the answer.

As Yvonne says, rape is usually premeditated, not a sudden impulse. Therefore, we say that those contemplating rape can be deterred by being given to

understand that if they do it, they will suffer loss of liberty.

The 19-year-old Noreen Winchester was actually imprisoned for 'murdering' her father, who had raped her ever since she was 13, when she 'consented'. The law is weighted against us, and we want it changed, here and now. Sorry, we can't wait till after the revolution, which will not wave a wand, anyway.

Revolutionary socialists never tell us to be kind to the capitalist boss. We must fight him all the

way. But we are told we must be kind to men who rape women. Why this distinction?

Many feminists blame male leadership for anti-feminism on the extreme left. But I am not sure this is fair. Many men support our demands, while many a woman, like Yvonne, can be as anti-feminist as any man. So, I would like to know whether or not her article voices the agreed views of Socialist Challenge.

KATHLEEN JONES,
Shrewsbury

Letters letters Letters

Write to SC letters, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XF

Editor reserves the right to cut any letter over 400 words.

SDP — coalitionism is the problem

THE central point of Tommy Cusack's letter (25 February), that the SDP must be regarded as a 'party of the petty bourgeoisie whose only future could be as a junior party to the Tories', is false and misleading.

He asserts that the British ruling class will not 'entrust their future' to the SDP. In proof he offers the SDP's split over Tebbit's Bill. But the ruling class doesn't opt for a single political solution in a crisis.

Take, for example, the crisis over Irish Home Rule in the early part of this century. This split the ruling class almost to the point of civil war. It contributed decisively to the eventual destruction of the main party of the industrialists, the Liberal Party.

Today, the ruling class and its spokespeople are divided on the tactics to use to achieve their common goal of weakening the unions.

The confusion in the ranks of the bosses is evident from various tussles inside the CBI and Engineering Employers Federation and the debate between 'wets' and 'drys' in the Tory Party. The obvious difference between the Tories and the SDP is that the Conservatives have the discipline of Government to force them into some outward semblance of unity. Comrade Cusack's assertion



Roy Jenkins: looking over Hillhead precipice?

that the 'millionaire press' has now deserted the SDP is a little hasty. Some press commentators certainly have lost their starry-eyed worship of the SDP. But they have done so in exact proportion to the SDP's mounting threat to inflict a historic defeat on the Tory party. Their love of the SDP was based on the clear attempt to form a 'reliable' leftist party, free of union links and capable of

marginalising an 'unreliable' Labour party infected with Beninism. However, more Tories have turned to the SDP than Labour supporters. The prospect of a humiliating defeat of Toryism, a strong 'centre' party and a still relatively strong Labour Party is not one that they relish.

Comrade Cusack employs the term 'petty bourgeoisie' as an epithet with which to dismiss the

SDP as irrelevant. Does Tommy honestly believe that the SDP's programme essentially defends the interests of small capitalists, shopkeepers, self-employed and small farmers — the petty bourgeoisie?

He seems unwilling to accept the simple fact that it is possible to have two bourgeois parties in Britain. In the end his haste to dismiss the SDP as a small show leads him into serious political errors.

He quotes the attacks of the Labour right against the SDP after they voted for Tebbit. He then asks whether the SDP can now form an alliance with the labour bureaucracy. The answer is simple: yes!

Has Tommy forgotten that that last Labour government survived from March 1977 first on Liberal support and, then, even on the votes of the Ulster Unionists?

By giving credence to their totally fraudulent anti-SDP rhetoric he doesn't exactly equip us to fight the crusade for 'coalitionism' that we will quite likely face. Appeals to working class militancy won't solve these eminently political problems any more than the struggle which brought down Heath automatically prepared us for the fight against 'social contractism'.

COLIN TALBOT,
London

Spanish conspirators on trial

SINCE 19 February thirty three people — thirty two of them army officers — have been on trial in Spain, charged with organising the attempted coup d'état last February. Here we publish some observations on the trial by Frank McBride, our Spanish correspondent.

Compared with the tale of intrigue and dirty dealing turned up by the trial of the Spanish coup d'état conspirators, *Dallas* is mild stuff indeed.

But it's an even bet which of the two long-running soap operas is attracting more attention in Spain. Perhaps because most of the conspiracy details have been heard before, perhaps because of fatalism about the trial outcome.

One of the country's most popular cartoonists has two men talking about the trial. 'How many years do you think they'll really get?' asks one. 'Many, just as long as they don't

decorate them', is the reply.

But there are many questions more interesting than 'who shot JR?'. They may or may not be resolved by the trial. Who was the real head of the plot? General Alfonso Armada — at the time second in the army chief of staff — denies that he was anything other than an intermediary between Tejero and his own superior, attempting to end the occupation of the Congress.

But according to Tejero and General Milans del Bosch, Armada wanted to be President of a new government. And he had them believe that the

King backed the coup.

The conspirators like the Ewing family present an interesting mix of colourful and drab personalities, weak and strong. Some had apparently been conspiring for over a year, others joined in once the part had started. But the other big questions are about those who aren't in the dock.

What about the commanders of four of Spain's military regions who Milans del Bosch claimed had backed the coup on the night of February 23? Or General Jose Juste, now retired commander of the crack Brunete division who dithered over sending his troops into action?

If the Brunete, the Spanish Army's principal strike force, had left the barracks and taken the strategic points of Madrid, what would have hap-

pened?

Why is only one civilian being tried? Surely more must have been involved. What about the role of big business? According to the Communist Party paper *Mundo Obrero*, leaders of the Spanish equivalent of the CBI had several contacts with the conspirators and banks may have financed the coup attempt. They base their reports on police papers, handed to the Minister of the Interior, and which have obviously been covered up.

The trial is expected to last until the beginning of April at least. The result is anybody's guess, though they can't all have been 'just following orders'. For those that do get put away there is the hope of an amnesty (to mark the Pope's autumn visit?)

A purging of the Fran-

coist state apparatus remains the only sure way to avoid that, but despite the efforts of the far left there have been no mass mobilisations around that theme.

The government and the Socialist and Communist Parties have appealed for 'peace and tranquility' during the trial and declare their confidence in military justice. This is despite the irony that the generals sitting in judgement on the attempted coup would not be there if it were not for Franco's own successful coup in 1936.

After the trial comes the World Cup and after that the Pope's visit which the bourgeoisie hope will maintain the 'peace and tranquility' they need for victory in early general elections.



MOVIMIENTO COMUNISTA

Poster of the far left MCE demands life sentences for the military plotters.

Portugal — General strike to topple the Government

By Stuart Piper

'The biggest strike the country has ever seen.' That's how Portugal's main trade union confederation, the CGTP, described the general strike called on 12 February to bring down the right-wing Democratic Alliance (AD) which is governed Portugal since 1978.

One and a half million workers, over half Portugal's working population, had paralysed the country's transport and most of its industry.

The following week Lisbon's tube workers saw a big increase after a further three-day stoppage. Three weeks later Portugal's ports were idle, the railworkers were continuing selective action and pressure was mounting for a further 3-day general strike.

The government could think of nothing better than to react with truncheons and hysterical claims about armed subversion.

It was an impressive demonstration of strength by the working class, clouded only by the continued division between the Communist Party (PC) and the Socialist Party (PS), and their parallel union confederations, the CGTP and the UGT.

Mario Soares and his fellow leaders of the PS led the UGT actively opposed the general strike as an adventure by the Communists. They prefer to concentrate on parliamentary negotiations leading, a revision of the existing constitution, to a coalition government with the 'social democratic' wing of the present government — hopefully with Mario Soares as president! (What chance, Dennis Healey and the SDP?) But many rank-and-file Socialist Party supporters in the trade unions refused to cross their fellow workers' picket lines.

Nor are the Communist Party and CGTP leaders blameless. Under pressure they have certainly taken a much more militant stance. But their militancy came late in the year, and they have con-

sistently taken a violently sectarian attitude which has made any genuine united action with even sympathetic socialist supporters impossible.

The pressure for a general strike came out of the growing militancy of Portuguese workers in their resistance to the biggest attack on their rights and conditions since the overthrow of fascism in 1974. This problem for the Portuguese ruling class is a combination of three basic factors: world recession, the loss of privileged access to the markets of its old empire, and a working class which is still strongly organised despite the disappointments of the revolutionary period in the mid-seventies.

Reforms

Their solution is to cut costs, attract new productive investments, especially from the richer imperialist countries, and sell cheaply-produced consumer goods like shoes and clothing to the big markets of Europe, preferably by joining the EEC.

In other words, the aim is to turn Portugal into a sort of Hong Kong, within Europe itself.

The key to success would be breaking the working class. Already Portuguese wages are the



Communist Party leader Cunhal (far left) applauded by Mario Soares (far right) in happier days.

lowest in Europe, and they have been getting lower. Unemployment is nearly 10%, and with inflation running at nearly 25% the AD government introduced a ceiling of 17% on wage increases.

At the same time, a package of tight restrictions on trade union rights is now going through parliament, severely curtailing workers' rights to strike, to job security, and to negotiate collective

agreements. The last year has seen a massive increase in industrial action, with important strikes by tobacco workers, dockers and transport workers, all breaking the government's

pay limits. In January of this year alone 900,000 workers, or one third of the total workforce, came out on strike.

The real problem for this working-class move-

ment is the lack of any clear alternatives being offered by the leaderships of the PC and the PS and their trade unions. Because of the lack of any real willingness on the part of the majority of the CGTP leadership to carry through the fight at each stage, the class struggle minority in the CGTP has begun to gain ground.

Though still comparatively weak, this minority brings together the two most important revolutionary organisations, the ex-maoist UDP and the smaller PSR (Portuguese section of the Fourth International), as well as a large number of independents.

It has won the leadership of some 20 district unions. Supporters of the PSR, for example, recently won elections in the shoeworkers' union of the industrial Aveiros district with 1900 votes, against 700 votes for the PC.

This minority was able to play a vital part in pressuring the CGTP leadership to call February's general strike and is arguing for the momentum to be carried through into a further, more prolonged general strike.

If the fight to bring down the AD government and force an early general election is successful, this minority current will have an even greater responsibility.

On their success in winning wider support for their policies, and in linking up with workers at the base of the Socialist unions of the UGT, will depend the Portuguese workers' ability to force their parties, the PC and the PS, to abandon their manoeuvring, assume their responsibilities, and form a joint government on an independent class platform.

Laurence Scott workers and Tebbit

By Celia Pugh

Laurence Scott have been amongst the first group of workers to have a foretaste of Tebbit's anti-union Bill — with court injunctions, picket restrictions and claims for the £6,000 costs of last year's bailiff operation. 'We've got no intention of paying this money, even if it means a rest in Strangeways prison', explained LSE deputy convener Steve Longshaw.

Steve was speaking

on a tour of South Wales last week with meetings in Merthyr, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Mardy. He wanted to explain to the labour movement that the battle at Laurence Scott's in Manchester had not been ended with the police riot which smashed their picket on 16 February.

Throughout the week, Steve explained, 'We've not been beaten, we've been cold out by our union leaders'. He reported to AUEW meetings that branches around the country are demanding the re-

election of the National Executive Committee of the AUEW under rule 14 of the union. This rule 14 campaign gathered backing from at least a dozen South Wales branches during the South Wales visit, which also included speeches from Ron Street, AUEW Broad Left candidate for the forthcoming national elections.

• At each meeting, a video film about the dispute was shown. Copies of the video, speakers and collections sheets can be obtained from LSE Shop Stewards, 20 Roundcroft, Romiley Cheshire.



LSE pickets attacked by cops

Tebbit: will the TUC fight?

By Pat Hickey

IN 1979 the average award to unfairly dismissed workers was £750. Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit now proposes to pay scabs a minimum of £20,000 if they get sacked for not joining a union. 'The most serious threat to the unions this century' is the TUC's verdict on his so-called Employment Bill now going through Parliament.

At the same time youth are being virtually conscripted. Tebbit offers them starvation wages for the privilege of being blamed for the mess his government has created.

SOGAT

A joint fight by the unions and the Labour Party, reaching out to youth for mass action to smash Tebbit's twin at-

tacks, is the best way to resist.

Will the TUC fight? Print union SOGAT's Bill Keys has called for a mass campaign to defeat the Bill, breaking the law if need be. The TUC is holding a special conference of union executives on 5 April at Wembley. The buildup will include mass leafletting, and there is a proposal for a lobby of parliament and national rally at the end of April.

Boyd

But many of the preparatory regional conferences have had hardly any publicity, and with such working class heroes as Sidney Weighell on the platform, their ability to galvanise rank and file support might be questioned.

Nor does it encourage trust to read Sir John Boyd in the last issue of his union journal, where he

argues that state sector strikes should be banned — especially when we find that Boyd and Duffy are spearheading a militant TUC campaign to ask the employers to oppose Tebbit!

There is also a danger in the TUC's potentially excellent £1m fund which the General Council want to use only to fight legal actions when the Bill becomes law. Lengthy court battles should not be a substitute for defence of victimised militants.

The TUC should be called on to withdraw from all joint government/TUC bodies like the NEDC — the National Economic Development Council — and declare now that it will not go into the courts. It should openly back anyone now being threatened with the courts, such as the Plessey workers whose victory is still being challenged in the Court of Appeal.

The Liaison Commit-

tee for the Defence of Trade Unions has called a lobby of the TUC meeting. We should use this to mobilise mass opposition to the Bill and force the union leaders to act.

Action

Our aim should be to build a mass base for local resistance against any attempt to use the Bill, starting from what Tebbit and the courts are now doing to youth and the unions. At the same time we must fight for a national campaign of industrial action to stop the Bill becoming law.

On their past record the TUC leaders can't be trusted further than we can throw them. But the initiatives they have taken so far open the way for a real united drive against the Tories — if we use them properly.

Ireland — trade union leaders don't help

THE DISCUSSION at the recent Labour Movement Conference on Ireland showed many of the 400 people there how trade union leaders help the government in its war against nationalists in Ireland. In his second article MARTIN COLLINS looks at the speeches of British trade unionists.

There are two views in the unions on what to do about Ireland. The first, that of the government backed up by the trade union leaders, is that the British government should impose a political solution that restores order, removing the threat of British interests. The second is that of the vast majority of workers seen in the opinion polls, that Britain should get the troops out of Ireland, which would let the Irish work out what form of government they want.

Lou Lewis (London regional organiser for UCATT) argues for the first. Lou, like the Communist Party, agrees with the government that the IRA is to blame for the troubles. Both think that the state in Northern Ireland can be reformed democratically to allow equality and justice, thereby ignoring hundreds of years of history which demonstrate how British rulers have manipulated Irish politics to maintain their profits.

Campaigns like Better Life for All embody these ideas, but are so obviously impractical that they will never get significant support outside the closed world of the trade union bureaucrats who set them up. The support for

these imaginary 'campaigns' is an excuse for not allowing discussion in the unions about Ireland — they say 'we've already got policy, and no one follows us.'

The opposite view was argued by Chris Robinson, a Lancashire NALGO official and prospective Labour MP for Rossendale. Chris started by looking at the great debt owed by British workers to the Irish — we have allowed our rulers to suppress Irish self-government for too long. After arguing for getting the British out, he looked at why the British unions have not followed the constituency parties discussing Ireland.

Because the reformist leaders of the working class want to tinker with the capitalist system, rather than organising all the workers together to replace it with socialism, they argue that the Labour Party gets on with politics and the union looks after the economic interests. They avoid joint action.

They think that Britain's imperialist position is to the advantage of workers in this country. Whereas they may try to make it 'fairer', they still support it. The political crisis that will be created when the British get kicked out of

Ireland will shake all the political institutions in the country, including the unions. This is the last thing the union leaders want. It is far safer for them to go on backing the army.

Most British unions that organise workers in the North of Ireland have a right wing block which supports the British executive. Workers in the North who belong to British unions have split from the Irish unions because the unions wanted a break from Britain.

Any discussion inside those unions threatens the pro-British government position of the union, and threatens to break the link between this right wing block and the executive. This in turn weakens the position of the executive against the growing pro-British left-wing.

Organising workers in Ireland from Britain, whether it is through the trade union or a Labour Party, means organising only those workers who see themselves as part of Britain. This is not in the interests of the solution in Ireland at all.

By protecting their own positions in the union, the trade union bureaucrats support the continued division of Ireland, and the army of occupation that is its main pro-British position. Building opposition to the division of Ireland and getting rid of the bureaucracy of the unions is all part of the same job.

East London teachers' strike wins support

By Ken Glanfield, Barking NUT

AS THE strike in Barking, East London, of 900 teachers over job loss and educational provision enters its third week there has been excellent support among parents and school students. Support from the labour movement has been uneven.

On 3 March a demonstration of 700 parents, school students and teachers completely encircled Barking Town Hall. They demanded 'no ifs, no buts, restore the education cuts'.

Following meetings in many local secondary schools, a parents' action committee has been set up whose aim is to organise a parents' strike on Wednesday 17 March.

It is hoped that parents will keep their children at home on this day.

The picketing of schools by the members of the National Union of Teachers has resulted in the closure of seven primary schools.

However, 52 schools including the secondaries remain open.

The transport workers union has asked its members not to cross our lines while the general and public employees' unions,

standards and defend teachers' jobs' and affirms the solidarity with our struggle.

The Barking NUT is calling for strike action.



NUT leader Ken Jones

although expressing sympathy, have yet to take a decision.

Backing has come from the South Essex district committee of the engineering union, the AUEW.

A resolution from Leyton constituency Labour Party calls 'on the Barking Council to honour the commitment of Labour councils to protect and improve educational stan-

Wednesday 10 March looks likely to receive support from Barking precinct of North East London Polytechnic and Barking Technical College members of NATFHE.

Message of support can be sent to: Ken Jones, secretary, Barking NUT, c/o AUEW offices, 5 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex.

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Pakistani Workers' Association

'Black people must fight'

SULEMAN MOHAMMAD came to Britain from Pakistan in 1966. He lives in Sparkhill, an area in Birmingham where the Pakistani Workers Association has a high proportion of its members.

His last job was as a welder in West Bromwich. Since that time, two years ago, he has been unable to find work.

Suleman talked to **VALERIE COULTAS** about the PWA and what black workers feel about the Thatcher government.

The PWA has so far concentrated on exposing corruption in the local community. Suleman explains: 'Leaders, self-appointed ones, get a position on a police liaison committee and then they take bribes to give people information about their rights.'

'Black leaders, some of whom are notorious throughout Birmingham, like James Hunt, a black councillor in Handsworth, use the fact that many black people can't speak English or don't know their rights, to get grants off government institutions for doing absolutely nothing.'

The PWA is a new organisation in the black community with branches in London, Bradford, Coventry, Tipton and Nottingham. The Sparkhill Youth Movement, initiated by the PWA, attracted 50 people to its first meeting and will be open to all youth in Sparkhill.

Sports facilities, the treatment of black youth in school and employment opportunities are among the issues that the new youth movement will take up.

'What does this system teach our kids?' asked Suleman. 'Some children come out of school and they can't read and write. Ethnic minorities go to school for five hours and then they go home to a completely different culture and speak a different language.'

'I want to see more opportunities for the ethnic community to control the education our children are receiving.'

'I'm not saying that Pakistanis should be fitted into the system. I'm saying that schools in areas like Sparkhill should take our needs as a community into consideration.'

'The PWA is making youth aware that the conflict between them and their parents often occurs because we come from different

cultures and that the unfair economic system — which we hate — is what we have to fight.'

Suleman has no illusions in the Tory party. 'The Tory party says that every individual in society should work for himself. When you breed this sort of person you have a class system where you have rich and poor.'

'We come into the poor category. The Tory party today represents the wealthy in this country, not the poor.'

'The rich go anywhere they like. They have no boundaries.'

'These immigration laws they introduce, they are only aimed at poor black people... Black people must organise themselves to fight these laws as Anwar Ditta did.'

We agree with the Labour Party that there should be a socialist society based on equality in this country. When we look at the state of the Parliamentary Labour Party, who are all — perhaps I should say in their majority — self-interested, you can see they are being used by the wealthy of this country.'

Suleman has little time for his own MP. 'That Roy Hattersley's a racist bastard. He's racist, and the only contact he has with the Pakistani community is with the corrupt elements.'

'The majority of Pakistanis are not very well-represented by Roy Hat-



PWA members demonstrate

tersley in Parliament. He doesn't even represent white workers in Sparkhill.'

'There's a majority of people unemployed in Sparkhill. What is he doing about that? Absolutely nothing.'

Suleman concluded by refuting the lies of the right-wing in their witch-hunts in the Labour Party. 'I think this label "extremist" the Parliamentary Labour Party put on Tariq Ali, Peter Tatchell and Tony Benn is a load of rubbish.'

'Peter Tatchell said that extra-parliamentary action should take place. This parliament only serves the wealthy, all the legislation it is passing is to protect the wealthy.'

'People must realise that parliament is not an absolute authority — it's not a God — it's run by men and men can be self-interested.'

'People should tell their MPs that they are supposed to represent their area not themselves and if they are doing nothing for the people they represent — like Roy Hattersley — they should be removed.'

'I'd rather have Tariq than Roy any day and if he sold out we'd put someone else in to replace him.'

Defend Newton Rose

By Toni Gorton

CHEERS broke out in the Appeal Court on Monday 8 March as Newton Rose, a black youth from East London, had his conviction for the murder of a National Front supporter quashed.

Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice said that he and the other two justices 'deplored' the trial judge's action of giving secret instructions to the jury telling it to reach a verdict within 15 minutes or be discharged.

But Newton is still under threat from the Crown prosecutors who are appealing the decision and calling for a retrial.

In an unusual move the court allowed Newton Rose bail and he is now free as are his three friends who were sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

The Newton Rose Action Committee had picketed the court and distributed leaflets stating that the case had caused alarm about secret interference with juries by judges and 'the constant fit-up of young blacks by the police and the methods the police use to get incriminating "confessions".'

Newton Rose still needs our help, contact his defence committee c/o 76 Stroud Green Rd, London N4 or phone 01-272 4889.



Students sit-in, march against 4% rise in grants

By Valerie Coultas

OCCUPATION fever is hitting the campuses as Margaret Thatcher's education cuts hit home. Student grants will be frozen at the four per cent that the public sector employees face if Maggie has her way. This will mean that for the third successive year student income will fall further below the rate of inflation.

As part of a week of action called by the National Union of Students and the British Youth Council some 75,000 students walked out of their universities and 40,000 joined a lobby of parliament on Monday 2 March.

Sheffield Poly, Leeds and Sussex Universities were occupied — Senate meetings at Hull were invaded.

York University administration block was occupied on the Monday and finished four days later.

A member of York Labour Club and spokesperson for the occupation told Socialist Challenge why she thought it was vital to take on the Tories:

'The situation is getting more and more severe. We've written leaflets, we've written petitions, we've gone on marches and nothing's been done, she said. 'We'd like to think of school leavers in the

future — universities are becoming more and more of an elite as it becomes harder and harder to get a place.'

'I think there's few people in York Labour Club who'd take an SDP line on education cuts — prolonging them but having no alternative.'

It's true that we can't stop trains like the ASLEF drivers did but that's no reason for doing nothing at all.

'We're putting pressure indirectly on the government. We're disrupting things to an extent which will embarrass the government and the administration so that they'll think twice about cutting.'

'But we're also raising consciousness about the appalling consequences of government policies in higher education, not only on the campuses but also among the general public.'

'We've also raised demands about YOPS saying that any YOPS worker here should be paid the full union rate.'

'There's been wishy-washy talk from the NUS but they haven't organised the week of action at all. People say Dave Aaronovitch has got a lot fatter since he took office going to all the lunches he's invited to.'

'We've had to take the initiative ourselves.'

Rail Fight Continues

By Brian Grogan

London traindrivers are to march to a lobby of the final stage of the Railway Staff National Tribunal on Monday 15 March. Only two of the previous fourteen rulings at this level have gone in favour of drivers. This is why they are keeping up the pressure.

The drivers union ASLEF has launched a petition to indicate the overwhelming backing that exists for the executives stand on the maintenance of the eight hour day.

Further action is also being planned by National Union of Railwaymen members. A meeting of depots in the North West has decided to follow the London lead and take a day of action against flexible rostering. And a petition has been launched amongst NUR members to

indicate the strength of feeling against the executives agreement with British Rail. It is hoped that these activities will lay the basis for joint NUR and ASLEF action if the traindrivers are forced to take further action.

Vigilance is absolutely vital. Already BR is pushing ahead the implementation of the one person operation of trains which threatens 38,000 jobs. No reliance can be put on Sid Weighell to oppose this.

Air strike solid

THE Transport and General Workers' Union has given full backing to Heathrow ramp-workers' four-week old struggle.

A full executive meeting has put out a directive to all union members to take action in support of the strikers.

Officials are contacting other site unions to try and stop the scabbing organised by British Airways' management.

'This is not just a strike — it's a lockout,' said stewards' chairperson Mike le Cornu.

On 12 January management gave six months' notice of termination of existing agreements, and three weeks later announced that they were unilaterally imposing new working arrangements.

These would have meant an increase in working hours from 38½ to 40 per week, and would have scrapped an earnings clause with

consequent losses of up to £20 per week. The workforce refused the new arrangements and on 9 February were locked out.

Pickets have been moved outside the airport but are now successfully turning away customers and contractors. No freight and no mail is leaving.

Mike rejected management's claim that it was running a 90 per cent service. '90 per cent of what?' he said.

Support for the strike is solid and has been growing, as shown by votes at weekly mass meetings. But solidarity is needed.

The stewards' committee has called on all trade unionists to respect its picket lines.

Donations and messages of support can be sent to R. Davies, c/o Feltham Community Centre, Hanwoods Road, Feltham (Tel 01-751 4618). Cheques to R. Davies 1/238 Branch TGWU.

T Lucas return

By John Lovibond

AFTER three weeks of struggle against redundancies at the T Lucas plant in Kingswood, Bristol, a mass meeting of the 250 workers voted by a narrow majority of 18 for a return to work.

The meeting on Friday 26 February organised jointly by the strike committee and management was marked by confusion and disorganisation.

Angry scuffles broke out on the floor when managing director, John Chadwick, threatened a complete shut down if the strike wasn't ended.

This backed up several threatening letters sent directly to the workers over the heads of the strike committee, which was slow to counter the arguments.

After major support from Scotts, Staffa and the Bristol labour movement this vote is a major setback for Lucas workers.

The bosses moved quickly

to exploit practical mistakes made by the strike committee and the slowness of the union, the TGWU in giving official support.

Further redundancies are now in the pipeline to take out the key militants. Lucas workers have taken a bad knock but they aren't crushed.

Chadwick realised its not over when he warned office staff and senior management not to gloat.

If the lessons of this failure are well learned the next round will go to the shop floor.

Rusk worker, Paul Wilson is sure of one thing: 'If we'd carried on another two weeks, we'd have beaten them.'

Free the Bradford 12
National demonstration
Leeds
Saturday 3 April

Further information from the national mobilising committee, Box JK, L.A.P., 59 Cookridge St, Leeds 2.

Socialist Challenge

Save our transport!



THIS WEEK'S protest by transport workers against the Law Lords' decision should be the start of a campaign to force the Tories to back down. As the train drivers showed, only such firm action frightens the government. And now the militancy of the South Yorkshire bus workers has forced the county council to keep fares frozen.

That is why the Tory press has to resort to such lies as the *Standard* did last Friday. This dirty London evening rag quoted GLC leader, Ken Livingstone, as being against the one day stoppage and even all out strike action. Ken Livingstone denies that he said this.

In fact he is in favour of 'any industrial action in defence of jobs'. But the lies in the *Standard* had one purpose and one purpose only: to

divide and weaken London Transport workers taking their first joint strike action since the General Strike in 1926.

Socialist Challenge spoke to the editor of the *Standard*, Louis Kirby, who refused to retract. He did admit that an 'unfortunate' error had crept into the copy. What Ken Livingstone actually said was that 'a one day strike will have no major impact.'

The word *major* was left out which did render the whole sentence rather different politically from the original.

What the *Standard* editor told us was that 'Ken Livingstone only complains when we make him sound like a reasonable character.' What Louis Kirby really means is that whenever Ken Livingstone and other Labour leaders take a lead and come

out in full support for workers' actions, newspapers like the *Standard* don't like it.

Fleet Street is a mouthpiece for the Tories while the courts do Thatcher's dirty work.

All action taken by London Transport workers has to be supported. If Ken Livingstone had been prepared to take more of a lead in defying the Law Lords and in supporting the rank and file in the unions who do want to take on the Tories, then the *Standard* and its ilk would have no impact.

Now the GLC, the Labour Party and the trade union movement have to throw their full weight behind transport workers as they fight to save their jobs and to keep a service for their fellow workers in London.



Support the paper which tells the truth on Thatcher's Britain

By Steve Cannon

THERE ARE TWO faces to Thatcher's Britain. There is Windsor Castle, the House of Lords and the pomp and ceremony that will greet Ronald Reagan when he arrives in June. And there are those on whom the system rests; the millions of workers whose wage levels are being eroded, youth, women and blacks on the dole, and, abroad, the Irish people and the enslaved blacks of South Africa.

Socialist Challenge exposes the first as 'the crap of centuries' and backs the second face of Britain against their oppressors.

Nothing less than the overthrow of the whole rotting system and its replacement by a society based on social need rather than private profit is our aim.

That's why the capitalist press hate us and all those who seem to challenge the status quo.

Des Stevens has written to us saying: 'I enclose a cheque to pay for a little more food for your reporters. I am sure that the capitalist press would like to see us starve to death in addition to the millions they kill off every year — under the banner of free enterprise.'

He's right. Your paper is battling for existence. The situation is very critical. We are now more

than £3000 behind in our fund which pays our reporters, and the printing and design costs of our paper. For two consecutive weeks we are below this total.

A reader has written in to ask why socialist papers give such prominence to their fund appeals. The simple truth is that, unlike the capitalist press, the workers press cannot rely on advertising to bail them out. Their only guarantee for existence is the commitment of their readers.

That's what we are asking you for this week. To make a commitment that your paper will not go to the wall and that we will raise the necessary amount by the end of March that we need to bring out the truth on Thatcher's Britain.

Our thanks this week to:

Islington readers	£	5.00
Bristol		20.00
Miscellaneous		9.00
Outer West London		75.00
Birmingham		400.00
Swindon		34.00
Leeds		142.00
Swansea		15.00
Leicester stamps		20.00
Middlesborough		30.00
Ed Mahood		10.00
Liverpool		65.00
League for Socialist Action		105.00
Total	£	931.00
Grand Total	£	9,383.80
Grand Total should be	£	13,180.00

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BANKER'S ORDER FORM

Your Bank

Name of Account to be debited

Account Number

Our Bank..... Socialist Challenge

..... Lloyd's Bank, 19 Upper St, London N1

Account No 0179678

Sorting Code..... 30-94-57

Amount to be paid..... Monthly

First Payment due..... And on the same date in the month thereafter.

Signed.....

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All out for national sales day — 3 April

The first plans for National Sales Day are beginning to come into our Action Desk. Hackney readers will be selling on the big Kingsmead Estate in East London that day.

They'll be getting out the truth on Thatcher's

Britain, looking for new readers for the paper, organising for socialist policies.

They'll be taking out a paper which explains the Thatcher offensive and puts forward the ideas to beat it, including how to fight the opposition of the

trade union and Labour Party leaders who want to hold back the fight.

We'll be finding new readers like Alan Jarman from Oxford who writes: 'As a long standing member of the Labour Party I contribute regular-

ly and buy the newspaper as I find it informative and sensible.'

So ring up the Action Desk with your plans for National Sales Day this weekend. (Action Desk 01-359 8371 Sunday 2.00-5.00pm)